# Letters to a Niece

HENRY ADAMS

Love & all good wishes
for a happy & success-
ful future to Ruth
from
Beatrix Kahl
June, 1925.

# LETTERS TO A NIECE
AND
# PRAYER TO THE VIRGIN OF CHARTRES

# LETTERS TO A NIECE
AND
# PRAYER TO THE VIRGIN OF CHARTRES

BY

HENRY ADAMS

WITH

A NIECE'S MEMORIES

BY MABEL LA FARGE

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1920

COPYRIGHT, 1920, BY MABEL LA FARGE

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

# PREFACE

THE letters in this volume, begun from the South Seas, to a niece of fifteen, are offered in all humility, and in full realization that they probably have little literary value compared to Henry Adams's letters to contemporaries, and no value or interest where there is personal praise, except to show his wealth of heart that had to spend itself, even upon the most unworthy.

There is no attempt to offer a complete series of letters, but rather some are chosen to accompany or illustrate parts of the article "A Niece's Memories," — used here as an introductory sketch, — which in turn must supplement the letters.

The notes toward the end are merely such as are written to people living in the same town, or near by, and are intended for those who can see, between the lines, that Henry Adams was in the world but not wholly of it, and that what he has so beautifully expressed in literary form in the "Chartres," and in the "Prayer to the Virgin," was not only literature to him, but was also a part of his unspoken life.

## CONTENTS


Henry Adams: A Niece's Memories 1

Letters to a Niece 29

Prayer to the Virgin of Chartres 123

HENRY ADAMS
A NIECE'S MEMORIES

# HENRY ADAMS
# A NIECE'S MEMORIES

"SOME old Elizabethan play or poem contains the lines:

> . . . Who reads me, when I am ashes,
> Is my son in wishes. . . .

"The relationship, between reader and writer, of son and father, may have existed in Queen Elizabeth's time, but is much too close to be true for ours. The utmost that any writer could hope of his readers now is that they should consent to regard themselves as nephews, and even then he would expect only a more or less civil refusal from most of them. Indeed, if he had reached a certain age, he would have observed that nephews, as a social class, no longer read at all, and that there is only one familiar instance recorded of a nephew who read his uncle. The exception tends rather to support the rule, since it needed a Macaulay to produce, and two volumes to record it. Finally, the metre does not permit it. One may not say: 'Who reads me when I am ashes is my nephew in wishes.'

"The same objections do not apply to the word 'niece.' The change restores the verse, and, to a very great degree, the fact. Nieces have been known to read in early youth, and in some cases may have read their uncles. The relationship, too, is convenient and easy, capable of being anything or nothing, at the will of either party, like a Mohammedan or Polynesian or American marriage. No valid objection can be offered to this change in the verse. Niece let it be."

With these words Henry Adams gives definite expression, in his preface to "Mont Saint Michel and Chartres," to that relationship which had long existed between himself and the younger generation — whether nieces, or "nieces in wish," or even young men. To them all he was the *generic Uncle*, the best friend — to whom they not only could confide their innermost secrets, their perplexities, hopes, and aspirations, but also at whose feet they could sit endlessly, listening to the most thrilling talk they had ever heard, or were likely to hear again. Such a combination of heart and mind, veiled as it was to the world, but poured forth to the young — and to the very young the more tenderly — could hardly

be apparent to the average reader of the "Education," for Henry Adams loved to hide himself, and invented every possible means for doing so.

He was sensitive to the point of pain, and shy of revealing himself to strangers. A lady who knew him slightly, complained after calling on him that Mr. Adams hardly said a word to her during her call, but turned his back and devoted himself to a small child who happened to be there. This was most characteristic. He did not mean to be rude, but he probably felt a panic of reserve, and no opening, no common language with the stranger; and so he hid his shyness in the child, who was to him "the eternal child of Wordsworth, over whom its immortality broods like the day," and who —

> Deaf and silent, reads the eternal deep
> Haunted forever by the eternal mind.

These lines, or others from the same poem, are quoted frequently in his writings, and in his words the "nieces" remember them, as if they were a running accompaniment to his thoughts. One can recall the tenderness in his voice as he would repeat "thou little child — on whom those truths do rest which we are

toiling all our lives to find." But what stranger could guess at the humility and self-abasement with which he would turn from his great thoughts and ponderous volumes, to become an admiring and awe-inspired playmate of the tiniest child that walked into his study. In the corner of that study, under the book-shelves, was a cupboard, with two doors and two compartments; and every child knew that there was to be found a complete doll's house, with each detail of furnishing chosen by the Uncle himself. The Uncle had a genius for buying children's toys, and would spend hours at the "Nain Bleu" or the Magasins du Louvre, choosing a combination of toys with the care and feeling for the child's point of view, as if he were arranging a choice bunch of flowers.

The general reader of the "Education" may admire or criticise what the book contains. The "nieces" are especially interested in what has been omitted. But here they pause at the sacred portals of silence, and the ground becomes delicate to tread. Twenty years are passed over — years that were the most joyful, as well as the most sorrowful of the Uncle's life. The *glorious* years were still

to come, at the end. The nieces' earliest recollections begin with the joyful ones.

In the Beverly woods, a footpath, strewn with fragrant pine-needles, and bordered with ferns and lichened rocks, led to the Uncle's and Aunt's summer house. It was like having a private entrance into fairyland, of which the Uncle and Aunt kept the keys and arranged the scenery. They had no children of their own, but they loved all young small things including dogs, and the dogs played an important part in their daily lives. Three little long-haired terriers were always to be seen tumbling about their feet or trotting after them on their walks. The Uncle's absorption in the dogs was akin to his passion for children, and he would lose himself watching their antics, or laughing over their humorous or pathetic traits.

At that time he was writing his "History"; hours of concentration were passed in his den, and sheets on sheets of beautifully written pages lay beside him. One could not forget that handwriting. Each letter seemed to be carved rather than written, and the effect of the whole page was that of an interlacing

Byzantine design, but perfectly clear to read. The nieces remember him as he sat at his desk, in cool white summer clothes — his fine head and thoughtful forehead dominated a small frame; his movements were deliberate — only the scratch of his pen would break the silence of the room, until the delicious moment came when he would stop, and turn to them with an irresistibly droll remark.

Often in the afternoons, the nieces would watch — almost enviously — the two figures on horseback vanishing into the flickering sunlight of the woods. An impression of oneness of life and mind, of perfect companionship, left an ideal never to be effaced.

But soon the joyful days were to pass away. The Uncle lost the companion of his life, and part of him was buried forever in silence, or in what the world called "irony." The Beverly woods never saw him again, until in the serenity of his eightieth year he returned unexpectedly, to pass the last summer of his life there, once more surrounded by the nieces and nephews.

Meantime he plunged into a life of restlessness and travel, of searchings, questionings, and of intense loneliness. The Uncle

and Aunt had built the new house in Washington together, but he was alone to move into it. He could hardly bear to stay there. Japan and the East beckoned him, and whispered their secrets of abstraction and of calm to his suffering soul. It was his first glimpse of peace, since his "life had been cut in halves" — "infinite and eternal peace — the peace of limitless consciousness unified with limitless will," the peace of Nirvana. The Uncle seized the new abstraction, and returned with it, resolved to have the idea embodied in a Western form of expression, that the Western world might understand and be consoled by it as he had been. He gave the idea to Saint-Gaudens, and ordered the monument to be begun that was to go over his wife's grave.

Then he started for the South Sea Islands, with John La Farge as a companion. Overtaxed and overstrained by sorrow, as well as by his efforts to surmount it, to Henry Adams the year in the South Seas was a reparation of mind and body. Sleep, which had nearly deserted him, returned once more, as "he wandered away and away, with Nature the dear old nurse" — across the Pacific Ocean,

from island to island, Hawaii, Samoa, Tahiti, Fiji, Australia, Ceylon — and finally back, by the Red Sea, to Europe and civilization once again.

The gentle monotony of the days, in a perfectly even climate, the splendor of the nights under the Southern Hemisphere, the sympathetic childlike quality of the natives, and the sound of the "eternal surf" breaking on the coral reefs, as day after day he sat and watched it through "the eternal cocoanut trees" — all these new sights and sounds cast their spell upon him, and awakened dormant instincts that for generations had lain atrophied in the purely intellectual atmosphere of his former surroundings.

The Uncle started out on his travels with a paint-box, and amused himself by trying to catch the lights and colors, under the instruction of his companion, who "would see sixteen different shades of red in a sky" that looked to the Uncle "just pure cobalt." A new world of perceptions opened out to him; and with his companion as a constant guide, the education of the senses began, that led him finally to his appreciation of twelfth-century glass, and the crossing of the chasm that

divides the Anglo-Saxon mentality from the Latin. But in the South Seas the education was of the *primary grade*, beginning with pure color, and the rhythm of movement in the native dances. When his Samoans imitated all sorts of daily acts or pretended to be birds or beasts as they danced, this was more novel to the deeply intellectual Uncle than any mental abstraction; but having the power to become a little child with children, he could appreciate and delight in these primitive traits. Another bond he had in common with them was that they were "tremendous aristocrats." "Family is everything," he wrote home, "and a great chief is a feudal lord who owns his village." These chiefs in the military shows, given in honor of the strangers, seemed to him "like Homer's heroes." And the girls in their garlands and "tapa" cloths, sliding down a waterfall at a picnic given them by a royal princess, reminded him of "Greek naiads."

In Tahiti again they were guests of honor, and were adopted into the principal clan by the old chiefess, "grandmother Hinarii," and given native names. In a letter he describes the chiefess, "who is a pure native," he writes,

"and speaks no foreign language. She is sixty-eight years old and refuses to sit at table with us, but sits on the floor in the old native way, and is a very great person indeed. In the evenings we lay down on the mats about her, and she told us of the old Tahiti people, who were much more interesting than now. She told us, too, long native legends about wonderful princesses and princes, who did astonishing things in astonishing ways, like Polynesian Arabian nights." The Uncle wrote down these legends, and printed them in a private publication called "Tahiti," thus preserving the last of the old Tahitian traditions handed down by word of mouth.

In Fiji they were guests of Sir John Thurston, the English Governor, and found themselves suddenly in an English country house, having to dress for dinner. Sir John took them, however, on an expedition through the interior of the island among the ex-cannibal natives, and they "saw Fiji as few white men have ever seen it," but though the war-dances were fine and the society very masculine, they made no intimate friends and had no special sentiment for the place as they had for Samoa and Tahiti. So they went on their

way to Sydney and Ceylon, leaving the children of nature behind them.

Once again as he approached the East, the Uncle's thoughts became more abstract, and returned to their starting-point of Nirvana, as he sat under Buddha's Bo-tree in "the ruined and deserted city of Anuradjapura in the jungle of Ceylon." It was here, or shortly after, that he composed the lines called "Buddha and Brahma," already published.[1] Ahead of him he had the world to face, and some kind of a solution to find for facing it, with his buried sorrow. One can almost see the application to his own problems in certain lines of the poem:

> But we, who cannot fly the world, must seek
> To live two separate lives; one, in the world
> Which we must ever seem to treat as real;
> The other in ourselves, behind a veil
> Not to be raised without disturbing both.

The puzzled readers of the "Education" may find in these lines much enlightenment, and a clue to Henry Adams's life in Washington, to which he was about to return. The two separate lives, "one in the world" and the other "behind a veil," describe the Uncle's

[1] In the *Yale Review*, October, 1915.

own life from here on. The "Education" gives an account of his life "in the world," with glimpses perhaps only to those who knew him, of his *inner shrine*. The "life behind a veil" reveals itself in the monument in Rock Creek Cemetery, and also in the volume "Mont Saint Michel and Chartres."

The idea of the monument has already been suggested. Translated into Western thought, Henry Adams called it "The Peace of God." Sometimes he would call it "Kwannon," the compassionate Virgin of the East, merciful guardian of the human race. After the glory of the "Virgin of Chartres" had been revealed to him, however, the Divine Mother of the West blended in his mind, in the monument, with the Virgin of the East.

Once again in Washington, the sorrow and loneliness of the Uncle's inner life persisted, in spite of the increasing richness of his outer life and circle of friends. In some chapter of the "Chartres" book, he has described human suffering, and with such intense feeling that one can only imagine it was his own experience: "People who suffer beyond the formulas of expression — who are crushed into silence, and beyond pain — want no dis-

play of emotion — no bleeding heart — no weeping at the foot of the Cross — no hysterics — no phrases! They want to see God, and to know that he is watching over his own." The Uncle often seemed "crushed into silence" at this period of his life, even in the midst of the gay throng that passed through his doors. Sometimes hours, or a whole day, might pass before he would seem to feel that he could speak, or join at all in the conversation of those around him. One felt a tense, seething inner life, an unsatisfied groping for something that even the monument with all it signified did not seem to have completely supplied, though one knew his thoughts were centred there. One can recall glimpses of him on horseback — a lonely figure now — winding down some path in the lovely glades of Rock Creek — his face buried in thought and in unutterable sadness.

His was no selfish sorrow, however, nor was it to stand in the way of sympathy for others. It was transformed, on the contrary, into an exquisite human compassion for the many who crossed his path. His range of sympathy was wide. People of the world, or their opposities, sought him out; great ladies

flocked to his breakfast-table or to dine, and met there stately Englishmen, or an occasional foreigner from the embassies, or some artist or scientist, or perhaps a Western beauty of crude parentage, but decked with shimmering jewels. The Uncle would appreciate the whole gamut of his friends, and would touch a human chord in each. Lovers confided in him, brides left him their wedding bouquets, young people confessed to him their escapades and sought his counsel, for they knew that his forgiveness and understanding of human frailty was unbounded.

No one who loved him really feared him, though his manner might at times be alarming to a stranger. His alternation of great gentleness with sudden brusqueness was temperamental and involuntary, and was part of his fascination. It made life exciting and varied in his presence. The brusqueness was nearly always to conceal a ray of tenderness that had escaped him. Once Mr. Hay had the inspiration to have these conflicting traits embodied by Saint-Gaudens in plastic form. He ordered a little medallion to be made representing the head of Henry Adams in profile, with the body of a porcupine and the wings of

an angel, and bearing the inscription "Henricus Adams Porcupinus Angelicus." Though intended as a mere joke, this little incident may serve to assure those who have felt only the quills of the porcupine in his writings that the wings of the angel were also there, as surely as the leaden casket hid the prize. The Uncle delighted in leaden caskets.

Equal to his sympathy of the heart was his intellectual sympathy in the efforts or undertakings of his friends. Whatever the problem presented, whether artistic, or literary, or scientific, he would throw himself into it as if he had no other preoccupation; and his enthusiasm and encouragement would often carry the friends far beyond the possibilities of their own unaided talents. His influence was an unworldly one, he appealed to them to forget the eye of the public in their pursuit of truth, and to let success in a worldly sense become a matter of relative indifference. A quotation from a letter to a young person on painting may serve to illustrate this influence:

"Don't be disturbed if you occasionally feel a disgust for paint and drawing. You would feel the same for the limitations of

sculpture, or architecture, or poetry, or prose, if you tried as hard to express anything in them. There is nothing new to say — at least not in our formulas. Everything has been said many — many — many times. The pleasure is in saying it over to ourselves in a whisper, so that nobody will hear, and so that neither vanity, nor money can get in as much as a lisp. I admit that this unfits one for one's time and life, but one must make some sort of running arrangement on every railroad and even in every school; and if you are to stop five minutes for refreshments at the Art Station, you must have those five minutes clear, as much as though you were a Botticelli — I should say the same of Religion, or Poetry, or any other imaginative and emotional expression."

The Uncle was emotional himself. He was passionately fond of poetry, and would communicate to his listeners his own thrill over certain lines of Swinburne, Matthew Arnold, or Tennyson, evoking memories of his youth and of England at the same time. The colors of a sunset, the texture of a leaf, would seem sometimes to stir in him "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears." One of the

nieces remembers being drawn aside by him out of a gay crowd, to share his lonely watching of a crimson sunset. The changing colors seemed to affect him as only the glass of Chartres was later to do. His old restless longing for something still undiscovered stirred in him, and as he watched the transient glow he repeated:

> . . . for my purpose holds
> To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
> Of all the western stars until I die.

He knew that he must be off again on his travels, in search of his "Princesse Lointaine," wherever or whoever she might be.

His goal awaited him in France; but he approached it unawares, on a journey to the Norman cathedrals. Though he had been more or less within sight of them for nearly forty years, still, he wrote, he had not thought himself so "ignorant or so stupid as to have remained blind to such things." He had been familiar with England and Scotland, and had traversed the East and almost every other part of the globe, including France; but France as an intimate revelation, as a treasure-house of art and thought, and finally of the crowning inspiration in

which his restless mind found rest, came late into his life, scarcely nine years before he wrote "Mont Saint Michel and Chartres."

One memorable summer for the nieces, the Uncle set up a household with them at St.-Germain, and taught them French history "under the venerable cedars of the Pavillon d'Angoulême, and rode about the green forest-alleys of St.-Germain and Marly," once more with a companion. But usually his summers were passed in Paris, in study and solitude, except for the ladies who besieged his tower of ivory, and drew him out to direct their taste in buying things or in sight-seeing. Sometimes they kept him very busy, and once in a while he would escape and disappear, cancelling all engagements, and going down to Chartres alone. Especially at Toussaint would he seek his Virgin's shrine, to spend the November day in the cathedral, "deadly cold and famished," but exhilarated by the beauty and consolation he found there. If his thoughts wandered back to the monument and his eternal solitary Kwannon outside of Washington, at Chartres the Virgin with her Divine Child lifted him up with a radiant tenderness that

he had not known before. His mind might be exercising itself in dynamic theories and mounting on dizzy flights, but his soul had found a refuge in which it could stay forever.

The Virgin was the embodiment of mercy to him. One has only to read over the description of the Western Rose of Chartres to realize how he felt about this aspect of her.

"Looking carefully," he writes, "one discovers at last that this gorgeous combination of all the hues of Paradise contains or hides a Last Judgment, . . . and we are at full liberty to feel that such a Last Judgment as this was never seen before or since by churchman or heretic. . . . That this blaze of heavenly light was intended, either by the Virgin or by her workmen, to convey ideas of terror or pain, is a notion which the Church might possibly preach, but which we sinners knew to be false in the thirteenth century as well as we know it now. Never in all these seven hundred years has one of us looked up at this Rose without feeling it to be Our Lady's promise of Paradise.

"Here as everywhere else throughout the church, one feels the Virgin's presence, with no other thought than her majesty and grace.

To the Virgin and to her suppliants, as to us, who though outcasts in other churches can still hope in hers, the Last Judgment was not a symbol of God's justice or man's corruption but of her own infinite mercy. The Trinity judged, through Christ; — Christ loved and pardoned, through her. She wielded the last and highest power on earth and in hell. In the glow and beauty of her nature, the light of her Son's infinite love shone as the sunlight through the glass, turning the Last Judgment itself into the highest proof of her divine and supreme authority. The rudest ruffian of the Middle Ages, when he looked at this Last Judgment, laughed; for what was the Last Judgment to her! An ornament, a plaything, a pleasure! a jeweled decoration which she wore on her breast! Her chief joy was to pardon; her eternal instinct was to love; her deepest passion was pity! On her imperial heart the flames of hell showed only the opaline colors of heaven. Christ the Trinity might judge as much as he pleased, but Christ the Mother would rescue; and her servants could look boldly into the flames."

But not only was the Virgin of Chartres

the embodiment of mercy and purity to Henry Adams — as Kwannon was also — but in her he found in its most perfect form, the mysterious underlying principle of the universe that so fascinated him, and that had been denied him in his own human existence, namely, the transmission of life. One can imagine what the Child of the Virgin meant to him, when every human child had filled him with such awe.

Thoroughly established under such a patronage, perhaps it was no wonder that the miraculous happened to him, and the impossible became possible. A severe illness passed completely away, from which the doctors had pronounced there was no hope of recovery. And six of the most serene years of the Uncle's life were still left to him. These were the *glorious* years, for they were like a resurrection, and almost a step into heaven. Two of the "nieces," now become like daughters, stayed with him constantly and administered to his wants like guardian angels, so that he found himself no more alone. Much of the time was spent outdoors, walking, driving, talking deliciously as of old; his eyes had begun to fail him, and the pur-

suits of reading and writing gradually had to be abandoned. But the Uncle took this as calmly as he took everything else now. His great delight was in listening to twelfth- and thirteenth-century songs, sung to him exquisitely by one of the "daughter-nieces." And their study and occupation was to discover these unpublished treasures in ancient manuscripts, with their old notes and modes, and add them to their collection. Songs of the Crusades, love-songs, or spinning songs composed their evening concerts for an audience of one, but every evening before saying good-night, the Uncle would ask for a song to the Virgin. With eyes half-closed and head thrown back, he would listen intently, as if joining in the song or *prayer* himself.

The summer of the war found them in a château in France, thus peacefully occupied. The Uncle had constantly predicted the war, for many years, and had left nothing of its horrors and complications unpainted. One can therefore imagine what it meant to his historian's mind when it actually burst upon the world. At first it left him silent, and he refused to talk about it. But once back in America, he watched it and spoke of it with a quiet

intensity. He wanted to live to see it through. His eightieth birthday came, followed by the worst moment of the war — the "dark before the dawn." Alas! that he did not live to see the turning of the tide! And yet his death was such a perfect one, without a moment's pain or illness, and surrounded by all that he loved best, that one could not have wished it to be otherwise. After a day spent with friends about him, and the evening in listening to his beloved songs, he went to his room as usual. And in the morning they found him asleep forever, with a look of thoughtful interest — almost of curiosity — upon his face, as if this new journey was of more import to him than any other he had taken. He lay there, in his own house in Washington, on Thursday and Friday of Holy Week; and on Easter Saturday morning, a lovely mild spring day, at the time of year that he loved most — "when everything is in promise" — they laid him in his own monument, beside his wife, who had waited for him and for whom he had waited all these years.

It has been asked, "What was the real Henry Adams?" The answers to this ques-

tion will be very different, often quite contradictory, though coming from equally good sources. Those who call themselves agnostics say that he was one also. A dignitary of the Church, intimate with him during the last years, felt convinced that the contrary was true, and looked to him for inspiration and guidance.

Undoubtedly Henry Adams was many-sided, and his sympathy and understanding of every point of view was so great that he seemed to share it entirely. He never liked to show that he saw farther or was any wiser than the person he was with, and usually took the attitude of being instructed. Also, his own life was one of progression, and people who had been particularly intimate with him during one phase of his life may not have been familiar with the other phases. Even those who read his writings will each find something quite different in them, according to what they are looking for.

One asks, therefore, whether or not to interpret as an intended last word some verses called "Prayer to the Virgin of Chartres," found after his death in a little wallet of special papers. These verses were apparently written

just after the "Chartres" book and while he was contemplating the "Education," and were shown by him to only one friend, a "sister in the twelfth century." One can understand that he did not care to publish them during his lifetime, for he never wished to lift the veil. In this "Prayer" Henry Adams makes an act of faith in the Son's divinity. He ends by saying in his own words what Saint John said twenty centuries before: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." Henry Adams felt the failure of the world to receive the light, but he leaves no shadow of a doubt that he himself perceived "That was the true Light."

# LETTERS TO A NIECE

# LETTERS TO A NIECE

## I

*Honolulu, Sept.* 10, 1890

I WONDER when I shall hear from you again, and know that you are at home. I wish you could make us a little visit here. You never saw anything more charming than our house, with its palm-trees and rose-garden, looking over the town to the ocean southward where we shall soon go. The house belongs to my classmate Hartwell, whose family is now living in Newbury Street, a very different place. Hartwell lent it to me. We took his Japanese cook, and here we have been nearly a fortnight, leading very lazy lives, and only energetic in scolding at the occasional necessity of going down to the town to buy something or make a call. . . . If there is any pleasant society here, we have not been much appreciated by it; but as I never go into society without being sorry for it, I don't much object to being alone with La Farge who is much better company than I can meet abroad. So he and I live always

together, sleeping in adjoining rooms with the doors always open; breakfasting at about nine, and then usually sketching till afternoon, dressed in Japanese kimonos, and never disturbed. My sketches are very funny, but I think he will take home a good deal of new work, for he enjoys it and has nothing else to do. Sometimes we drive off to some great view, and work all day. The only trouble is that no painter that ever lived could begin to catch the lights and colors of this island. I have learned enough to understand a little about what can't be done, but La Farge makes wonderful purple attempts to do it, though he knows how absurd it is. . . . The weather is divine. Almost always a strong northeast wind draws down the valley, from the ocean only ten miles across the island. The thermometer rises every noon to 83° and falls every night to 75°. I often get up at six o'clock in the morning and sit on our verandah till eight, with only my cotton kimono on, and am always surprised to find that I am perfectly comfortable. In November the rainy season begins, but till then the weather is always what we see it, and I do not know whether the mornings or the evenings are most beautiful. . . .

## II

*Samoa*, 19 *January*, 1891

We are still here, and I have not yet had any letters from you since Switzerland. Probably a bundle will arrive from Tahiti in about a week, but not before this letter will have to go. Last month I wrote to your father. That letter should reach on January 23. This letter should be delivered to you some cold morning about February 20. As you look out of your window, do you see much snow? Or is it a wet thaw? Is the day sunny and snappy? The idea quite braces me up. I like to brace up by deputy, and will appoint you deputy. Now, this, in a very rough way, is what I see, when I look out of my window; or rather, out of the side of my house; for a Samoan house, as you know, is only a turtle-back on posts. As my painting is hieroglyphic, I herewith explain that the water is meant for sea, and that the whites are left to indicate where the surf is breaking on the coral reef. If I dared, I would stick in a native or two, or some children playing, which would be true to the facts, as a rule, though just now no one is in sight, except an occa-

sional native strolling along the path, which leads by the seaside, and showing his or her red-brown back in preposterously picturesque harmony with the purple-blue of the sea.

An idler man than your dear uncle Henry during the last month, you would not find in Cambridgeport. I don't feel sure that you would find one even in Cambridge. I have done as near nothing as possible. La Farge is the energetic and practical member of our firm. He works away like a serious man. He paints, sometimes two sketches a day; photographs; writes like a steam-engine; and, with all that, manages to put in very nearly twelve hours a day in solid sleep, or at least in bed. I won't swear to the sleep. He is very well, in excellent spirits, and has done what seems to me extremely interesting work. I won't undertake to say what it will look like in a New York light, but here it looks to me very good; much better than he did in Japan, and very much more of it. As for me, I do nothing, unless an occasional letter counts. I loll all the day in our native house, and when, at five o'clock, the sun gets down, and the thermometer falls towards 80°, I take a native canoe and paddle over the reef to see the sun-

set. Did I send you any photograph with a native canoe in it? If not, I will stick into this envelope a sad attempt I made to paint one, after a small photograph; but don't you show my colored things! If you let them be seen by anyone, outside of you shrimps and your papa, I will never write you another line. I let you have my pictures because you children show me yours, which is fair exchange; but other people would think I was seriously intending to paint, and I don't want other people to think anything about it. The canoe is a dug-out; the trunk of a tree, chopped out with an adze, and held steady by a rough outrigger which rests on the water. With me alone in it, the boat is very steady, and rides easily on any breaker that is not so high as to flop over the edge. When two persons are in it, especially when they are large, the canoe is not so steady, as I found out yesterday when I took La Farge out for the first time. Then I could do nothing with it. The wind and current were strong and the wretched canoe would not head any way but broadside to the current. Still we drifted down to the harbor-point, to see the sunset, and then paddled back. Suddenly, without apparent cause,

the canoe slowly leaned over, and tipped us both into the water. The water was not a foot deep, and I might just as well have stepped out, for I always go barefoot, on the water, with linen trousers rolled to my knees; but the mean thing did it so gently that I was too late, and I am still wondering why it should have chosen that instant, rather than any other, to play us such a trick. Anyway, both La Farge and I were soused in the water, and we were just opposite the British Consulate, on a Sunday afternoon. Some little girls, about Molly's age or size, who were playing on the beach, laughed uproariously at us, and then ran out, crying in Samoan, "Wait, Akamu" — that's my name, Akamu, Atamu, Adam, out of their Bible — and very soon swashed the water out of the canoe and set us going again, shoving us along through the water. Their clothes consist of a bundle-handkerchief round the waist, and as the water is rather warmer than their natural temperature, they are in it about as much as out. So we came ashore at last, and it was quite pleasant to feel comfortably cool in our wet shirts, but I cannot conceive why that canoe tipped us over then, when we weren't doing nothing to it.

We stay so quietly by ourselves that we see very few people of our acquaintance, but at Apia, nearly a mile away, there have been great goings-on, for our new Chief Justice, who is to be a sort of dictator over Samoa. As we had seen the same sort of show on our travels, and had been the great people then, we did not care to see the thing again, in a crowd of very unsympathetic Europeans and Americans, among the frame-houses of Apia; but a number of our swell Samoan girls were there, leading their villages, and dancing their Sivas. This morning one of them — Faa-uli, daughter of Lauati, of Safotulafai in Savaii — came to call on us. I wish you knew Faa-uli. She is one of our favorites. She is five feet, three-and-a-half inches high; thirtytwo and-a-half inches around the waist; and her wrist is eight inches round. . . . Faa-uli is my favorite because she has quite an animated expression and quick eyes, and is full of fun and go; like all these girls, she is never without her duenna for propriety, and is much more particular in that way than our girls are; but I can never quite satisfy myself whether they would talk much anyway. Faa-uli's conversation this morning was just what

it always is like. She said she thought we had gone away; if she had known we were still here she should have brought us a present. Of course we said we wanted her, not presents; but that was not enough. She repeated again and again that she was ashamed not to have brought presents. Then we asked questions: What had she been doing? She had been unwell; nothing had happened at Safotulafai, but they had had some big dances there; native dances for visitors; she had begun dancing for us, and gone on dancing ever since. Then she wanted to know when we were going away; and so came back to her regret at having brought no presents. Then she said she must go. So I gave her a couple of colored silk scarfs, and off she went to start by boat for Savaii.

This is a fair specimen of a Samoan woman's conversation. I have never found one to carry it further. Sometimes I have got them to tell me about *aïtu* — spirits, or ghosts — and they sometimes make garlands and put them round my neck, or put a flower in my hat, and when they are wholly at a loss, the girls often begin singing their Siva tunes and going through the dance movements with their

hands, which seems natural, as they sit cross-legged on the ground, just as they sit in the dance; but they never talk, as we understand talking; and if they have what we call minds, they never show it. They show no curiosity about foreign countries, and no imaginations. Their good-nature is endless, and their spirits seem always gay; but they are more child-like than any child you ever saw.

We see little of them now, and not much of anyone except our neighbors about the house. The Samoans have told me all they have to say; at least all I have the perseverance to ask; and I have stopped my attempts to learn more. They are a pleasant people, and to anyone in trouble they are very sympathetic and devoted; but everything in Samoa is the same. Even the storms, at the top of their fury, blowing a gale and raining tubs of warm water on every foot of surface, look soft and purplish, as though they wouldn't hurt one intentionally. The islands are velvety, and the ocean is soft, as though it oiled itself, like the people, every day with cocoanut oil. We have been here nearly four months, chiefly to give La Farge time for his work; but I am going now. We are to

sail for Tahiti in about ten days. This is true heroism, for we dread the voyage. We are sure of bad weather, and the little steamer is vile, and filled with sheep.

Some day I expect to hear from you again, but it's no use asking questions. When six months pass without news, one must take it coolly. So far our winter has been very successful. I hope yours has been as good. Give my love to all the rest of you. I wish you would go to Washington as usual in April; but you must take a cook with you.

III

*Papeete*, 9 *February*, 1891

I've got all your letters at last. Two big ones were waiting for me here. After all, La Farge came with me, and we have been here since the 4th. We were a week on board the steamer, and I was even miserabler than usual. How I do hate the ocean, and what a lot of ocean I have got to travel! We have done more than six thousand miles already, on this trip, and I expect to do twenty thousand more before I get back to America. That means about four months of solid sea-

sickness even if I manage to do it all by steam, but here the steamers are very small, very hot, and very slow. They go about two hundred miles a day, and never are quiet. Yet I don't hanker after sailing in a schooner, which is our next fate.

Anyway, here we are, and a very out-of-the-way place we've got into. After reading about Tahiti since I was a child, I feel half angry to find that it's a real place, and not a pantomime. As yet we've seen only Papeete, which is a little French provincial town, pretty as can be, but neither Polynesian nor European, and quieter than any town you ever imagined. The natives wear clothes and look commonplace, after Samoa. They are, I think, a shade deeper in color, and I rather believe them to be a little more refined in features, and perhaps in figure, than the Samoans; but the difference is small, the language is much the same, and the only wonder to me is that the Samoans are so much like the Tahitians, and the Tahitians still more like the Hawaiians. There are lots of funny and mysterious things about these South Seas. How the people ever got here is a mystery; for, even with steam we were

a week coming, and a strong trade-wind, right against us, made me seasick all the way. Yet they got here, and, what is more, they got to Hawaii; and must have done it at least a thousand years ago, when even in Europe there were no vessels fit for such long voyages of discovery. Then the islands are queer and mysterious; all old volcanoes, but some, like this one, so very-very old that it seems wrinkled as Methusaleh or old Betsy. The soil is nothing but decayed lava, strong red in color, and the mountains are sharp like knife-edges, so that one can sometimes walk up their sides on a narrow platform only three feet wide, with a sheer precipice on each side for hundreds of feet. What could make such sharp spurs? Not rain, for rain levels. Something has planed away the sides as though a knife had cut them. Then the tides are quite uncanny, for they are always the same; every day at noon and midnight the tide is high, and never changes its hour. Then the island is full of ghosts. I never saw nearly so many ghosts anywhere else; and many varieties, some of them quite unusual. Then there are centipede fish; and poisonous fish that are sure death to eat; and

wonderfully colored fish, and more coral of outrageous purples and yellows and reds than you would dream of. I've not begun to find out all the queer things here, but already I feel as though it were the oldest and most unreasonable corner of creation, and that we are rather guilty of an impertinence in coming here at all. In other places something always moves; but nothing moves here, not even the tides or the children, except to fire off crackers on the Chinese New Year, which is now; and where else in Christian countries do boys keep the Chinese New Year! I think nothing has ever moved here since the last volcano shut up, and that must have been about the time that the world began. Everything is decrepit with antiquity, including your dear uncle Henry who is rapidly getting to think himself as venerable as the volcano. Nothing ever came here except a few men, and they are fast getting tired and dying out.

Of course it is pretty. Indeed it is beautiful. I enjoy it in a way, but I am altogether upset by its unlikeness to what I expected. Not that I know what I expected, but that the result isn't like it. The difference from

Samoa is wonderful, yet the two places are quite alike. This is nonsense, but true. Samoa was cheerful even under six inches of rain; Tahiti is melancholy even when the sun is brightest and the sea blue as glass. I don't mean that the place is gloomy, but just quietly sad, as though it were a very pretty woman who had got through her fun and her troubles, and grown old, and was just amusing herself by looking on, without caring much what happens. She has retired a long way out of the world, and sees only her particular friends, like me, with the highest introductions; but she dresses well, and her jewels are superb. In private I suspect she is given to crying because she feels so solitary; but when she sees me she always smiles like my venerable grandmother when I was five years old.

This is very silly, no doubt, Miss Polly-amiable, but just you come here and see if it's not true. If I were La Farge I would paint it. As I'm not, and can paint nothing except what I don't want to paint, I give it away to you. If you were here, you would be as puzzled as I am about it. Neither the residents nor the natives seem to feel at home

here, or to understand what business they have. There is a King, named Pomare, but he has abdicated. We called on him; he wore green goggles; smiled kindly, and was at the club the next evening, very drunk and noisy. There is a Queen, a pretty, ladylike woman, named Marao, but she could not stand it, and got a divorce. There is a French governor, but he is a Martinique negro. There are two or three thousand residents, but no one of them seems to have a nationality in particular. There are four or five thousand natives, or whatever the number may be; but they do nothing except get drunk and die. They don't even seem amused. Evidently something is the matter with the place. It has a sort of Rip van Winkle flavor, as you can see in the photograph enclosed, looking up from Papeete into the mountains. The curious peaks just in the centre, closing the valley, are called the Diadem. The second photograph shows its shape when nearer. The Diadem is not the highest mountain here, but it is the queerest, and for once I think it rather well named, as though some one were sitting in there, and one never saw anything of her but her crown. . . .

## IV

*Papara, Taiti,* 6 *April*

. . . WHATEVER under the sun can have become of you! No letters again! Nothing since When? Christmas? I must have told you to write to H. Adams, Crumpety Tree, South Seas. Never mind! None of my other letters hit me this mail, and I suppose I must have told everyone that I should be somewhere else. Not that I have the faintest recollection where I told them I meant to be.

Here we are still. Did I tell you where we were? No matter. We are somewhere. Just to-day we are staying with the head and chief of Stevenson's clan — Tati, whose old mother is hereditary chiefess of the Tevas. Tati is for all the world like dear old Richardson at thirty-seven. He is half English, or rather half English Jew; and the larger half native. He talks English and French faster than I can; and his sisters are as talkative in English as he is. Altogether I feel at home; as though I were staying on a farm by the seashore anywhere else. We are a large family gathering. We have our old grandmother, Hinari, the chiefess, who speaks no

English, and sits on the mats like a true princess, refusing to join us at table. Then comes Tati; then his sister Marao, once the queen of Taiti, but now divorced from Pomare, so that we are spared having him in our party; then Beretania, or Pree for short, the handsomest of all, but unmarried and delicate. Then Manahini, or Manini, commonly called Cheeky, a supposed variety of Chica, a handsome gipsy girl of twenty or two; then Norman, Arthur and Winny Brander, three nephews rising twenty and freezing thirty. Then Tati's huge daughter and son from school, and Marao's daughter, as big as Tati's, both only twelve or thirteen years old, but big enough to smother any of you if they kissed you. Then a dozen or two children, babies and dogs which seem to know who they each belong to, but whose parentage is mixed in my mind. Finally, Mme. Tati who seems very shy and whom I have hardly seen.

We have been three days together, but break up to-day. All the others go, but La Farge and I stay on a day or two to let our baggage get ahead of us, for we are to move across to the island of Moorea, some ten or

fifteen or twenty miles off Papeete. At Moorea, or Oponohu as the house or town is called, we shall be as solitary as Tautira, and do much the same things. In the South Seas one does always the same thing, which is no thing. I have done it for a month at Tautira, and am going to be busy at Oponohu doing it some more. I don't call it such hard work as I expected, though no one can call it easy. At home, it would soon break me up, but here the weather is divine, the scenery always sweet, and the world a long way off.

About the 25th we rather expect to sail away to the westward hoping to bring up at Fiji. Whether we shall really do so or not, I have no notion. Unless some one takes me by the collar and runs me on board of some vessel, I am just as likely as not to stay here till one of you girls comes to get me. La Farge sleeps about twelve hours a day, and wants to sleep the other twelve. I can't put more than nine or ten hours into staying abed; but when up I do less than he, and am not half as wide awake. I feel a disagreeable instinct to do something and a stronger antipathy to doing it. I want to go on somewhere, and don't know where to go. Life here is dull; not so dull as at

Maplewood or Beverly, but very-very stupid; and yet I seem to pass month after month of it without going away, and I paddle about the reef every evening just as though I did not know the sunset by heart already.

Poor Haapi cried all day when we left Tautira. What did she cry for? Haapi is Ori's wife, our hostess at Tautira, a motherly native with several children of varied ages. She took care of us; brought us little presents; made us straw hats; and adopted us into the clan, giving us native names. I suppose she likes to have strange people appeal to her imagination. I painted her native house or hut, and tacked my picture on the wall of our residence, where it was vastly admired by the whole village, and will, I am sure, be sworn to be a genuine La Farge whenever they find out that La Farge's pictures are more esteemed than mine. La Farge was jealous of my popularity, and so he set to work and painted a big pandanus fruit dropping to pieces so naturally that the whole village flocked to see it, and never looked at my picture any more. He will be sorry when my picture is bought by a New York picture dealer as a La Farge for a thousand dollars.

Still, I don't paint as well as I did. I do less well all the time, since my first little sketch that I sent to you. By and bye I hope to paint badly enough to be a professional and exhibit my pictures, though it is very hard to learn to paint as bad as that.

As I have no news of you, I can only imagine it. This letter ought to reach you about June 1, when you are deciding what to do for the summer. Suppose you write me a letter to tell me about it. When you have written it, direct it somewhere. As far as I can tell, I shall not get it, unless by accident, and you can address it to Europe, Asia, Africa or America, with fair chance of hitting me; but by way of a happy idea, try Australia. Send it to the U.S. Consulate at Sydney. I may be there by midsummer, and may be anywhere else, but the chances are that I shall pass that way before autumn, unless I pass some other way.

Love to everyone. Come to Taiti. The climate is good, but the mangoes are over.

## V

*Fiji*, 21 *June*, 1891

HERE we are in Fiji at last, while your letters, I suppose, are in Auckland. I shall not go to Auckland, but directly down to Australia, and have sent orders to have your letters forwarded to Sydney where I hope to find them about a month from now. Your next letter had better be sent to Baring Brothers in London, for La Farge and I intend to run up to Paris in October for a few days' junket. We left Tahiti on the 5th, by steamer, and stopped only for one day on the voyage at the little island of Rarotonga, arriving here on the 16th. Fiji is an English island or a group of islands, and has a Governor, Sir John Thurston, to whom I had letters of introduction. Sir John expected us, and brought us at once to the Government House where he was living alone with his secretaries. The Government House is a large group of buildings on a hill overlooking the coast and the harbor. The situation is superb, and the effect of dropping suddenly into an English countryhouse where one dresses for dinner and has a big library

to lounge in, is startling to us cannibals who have lived so long with natives. There is not much here besides the Government. The little town of Suva, where we are, has only a few hundred inhabitants, mostly officials; a few shops, and the usual cricket-ground and tennis-court which the English seem always to carry with them in their dressing-bags. Very few natives live here, for about forty years ago the native town was totally destroyed and exterminated in one of the native wars. So we see here nothing but English. This is no matter, for natives are never any good in these foreign towns, and one must go among them in their own villages to see what sort of creatures they are. Sir John has already taken us on one excursion where we passed the night in a native village and had a big reception and a dance, which reminded us of our Samoan shows. Samoa is only about five hundred miles away, and the groups of islands have a great deal in common, but the Fijians are not so handsome as the Samoans, and the race is more mixed with negro blood. Still the Fijians are a pretty fine people, and have pleasant manners and tastes. The Fijian houses or huts

are very handsome, even better than the Samoan, and have more decoration. The dances are different. The one we saw at Rewa the other day was a regular old-time war-dance. A hundred men or more, in phalanx, painted black and vermillion, with clubs and spears, gave us a real military howler prance, to the accompaniment of their native music. I was very anxious to see this sort of thing, and enjoyed it; but I like the Samoan dances better on the whole. The chief difference is that the women here are not as important social successes as at Samoa. They are not nearly so handsome, and are kept much lower. Society here is masculine. The men are very wild-looking, at first sight, for they have huge mops of crinkly hair which they trim to suit their ideas of personal beauty, so that sometimes the hair falls over their eyes, and sometimes makes a stiff wall across the top of their heads; but each is different, and I find much amusement in watching the styles. Sir John has a guard of about fifty, who do sentry-duty, act as boat crew, or wait at dinner; and the first effect of these mop-headed savages in white shirts trimmed with red, and bare legs, waiting at dinner, is very

droll. They offer you a potato as though it were a club, and I always imagine they are going to brain me with the claret-bottle. Really they are very docile and childlike. This island, Viti Levu, or Big Fiji, is quite large, and the interior is hard to reach, but the people are now all civilised, or at least perfectly peaceful, and have not eaten anyone for ten or fifteen years. They would begin again if they were left alone, and I have no doubt that in another ten years they would eat each other with as much vivacity as ever; but they are well off now, and contented. Next week Sir John is to take us on a long tramp through the interior, among the roughest parts of the island, where we are to pass a fortnight, and shall see whatever there is, but except for the fatigue of climbing over mountain trails, all up and down, we might as well travel up the Saguenay. We have not a fair chance of being eaten. I am not sure that any white man ever was eaten; and I am rather surprised to find that man-eating, even when common, was regarded as rather a doubtful question of taste; a sort of brag, not to be much admired, but rather intended to excite terror, or give an enormous idea of warlike ferocity.

Even among the black islands to the westward where they still eat each other as a habit, they conceal it from view, and no white man has ever been allowed to see a feast. Still I don't complain. The natives are fairly savage yet, and have not lost their customs, as the Tahitians have. They are one generation wilder than the Samoans. I should have been sorry to miss their acquaintance, and though I know they won't eat me, I feel better when I think they would like to. . . .

VI

*Kandy*, 10 *Sept*r. 1891

YOUR letter of March 26 to Tahiti followed me here, and reached me three days ago at the same time with your father's letter of July 30. So you see I have got all sorts of news of you, fresh and dried.

La Farge and I have waltzed ahead, from one island to another, till I have to think a long time before I can remember where we are, when I wake in the night. I've a notion that I sent you a letter from Sydney. Since then we have travelled very steadily, and have gone about six thousand miles. We

came by rail from Sydney to Brisbane, and by steamer along the Australian coast, through Torres Strait, into the Malay Archipelago, and past the long line of islands from Timor to Java, till we stopped at Batavia, the Dutch capital of Java. From Sydney to Batavia was four thousand miles of delightful travel, always in quiet water, generally in sight of land, and with lovely weather, moonlight nights, and a large, comfortable steamer. For the first time, we enjoyed the sea, and were sorry to finish the trip.

We stayed a week in Java, and went far into the interior, about ten hours' travel, to the end of the railway, a town called Garoet. Java is a tremendously big island, with more than twenty million people, and all the land, as far as I went, was cultivated like China, even to the tops of mountains; but I could see nothing very interesting except the eternal rice-fields. The Malays there are all Mohammedans and had no antiquities, no architecture, and hardly any arts. Batavia is a big city, rather amusing, but hot and flat and suggestive of fever as well as cholera. We came away without regret, and all I can really boast of valuable experience from it,

is a satisfactory knowledge of the *mangosteen* and *durian*, the two Malay fruits which were the object of my long journey from Boston. The *durian* is, in my opinion, a fraud. I can see nothing to recommend it. Walnuts and very bad cheese, in a soft paste, with a horse-chestnut inside, would be as good. Like the alligator pear, which is considered delicious, the durian is to me a sad disappointment and blight to my old age. The mangosteen is another story, and quite repays a week, or perhaps ten days, of seasickness. It is like a Japanese purple-lacquered fig, with a ball of white sherbet inside. From a sense of duty — because I may never have another chance, — I have eaten as many as I could. In some ways I prefer the mango as a steady diet, but the mango is prose, while the mangosteen is poetry. Here, in Ceylon, our servant has standing orders to provide a dozen mangosteen at each meal.

From Batavia we went up to Singapore, two days' steaming across the equator, so that at last we are on your side of the line again, after nearly a year in the southern hemisphere staring at Alpha Centauri and the Southern Cross. Singapore is a pretty city,

charmingly laid out, and filled with Chinamen, but hot and moist, and with nothing to detain us. We passed two days there, and then came on by French steamer five days to Ceylon where we arrived last Sunday evening, the 6th. No steamer sails, that we could take, until the 17th, so we have ten days to see Ceylon. . . . When I get to sea again, I will tell you our adventures.

*Red Sea. September* 30

The sun rose an hour ago from some Arabian desert behind Mecca, and with him I too rose from a somewhat hard bench on deck, and went below for my bath and toilet and coffee. Now, at seven o'clock, I am on deck again; the sun is well up, not a cloud in the sky; the morning is quite cool, about 87°; and, before it passes 90°, I can have an hour with you.

La Farge and I made our pilgrimage to the sacred Bo-tree of Anurajpura, the most holy of holies, counting majorities in this world. The trip was quite one of the most amusing we have made. Anurajpura, two thousand years ago, was a sort of London, only it stood in a great plain, which makes

the whole northern half of Ceylon, and which at this season is always as dry as baked brick. So they built enormous artificial lakes to store the water, and small tanks, about like your reservoir in size, to bathe in. The whole plain, for fifty or a hundred miles, is covered with mounds, like our biggest railway fillings, to dam river valleys, and with holes for ponds; but now the jungle covers everything, and the venerable people are happily dead and departed, and one sees nothing but an excellent road running through a forest, dry, dusty and burning hot. The weather report gave 96° as the return from Anurajpura the week we were there.

We left Kandy at noon, and at two o'clock started from the railway terminus in the mail-wagon, which was uncommon warm, but went through a pretty valley down, down, down, until the greenth of the mountains vanished, and all grew parched and brown, except the trees. We were amused, of course, for in the east one is always amused by mere force of habit; but we saw very little that was worth being surprised at. Tall ant-hills, shafts three or four feet high, decorated the roadside. Occasionally a squirrel, just like our striped

ones, capered across the leaves. A flock of jungle-fowl flew across the road. The lovely crow, the most amusing of birds, unless it is our blue jay, chattered everywhere. Groups of men — few women — more or less picturesquely undressed, and every shade of color from deep black, to Polynesian tint, were walking home from their fields. No white men at all, except three or four government officers, live in the whole district, and after reaching the plain, no horses live there either. We were driven in the mail-coach forty-two miles, and reached a government inn, or rest-house, at about eight, where we got some dinner with a curry which is always good in those parts; and as we sat in the dark on the porch waiting for the curry, the drollest little turnout trotted into the court-yard. It was Her Majesty's ox-mail-cart, which was to take us the last twenty-eight miles; and a real ox-cart too, but quite a gem; two-wheeled; so small that after our traps were stowed away at the bottom, and a mattress over them, La Farge and I could just lie, side by side, with our boots sticking out behind; but the prettiest was the two little humped oxen, fawn-colored, with sweet little

collars of bells. They trotted in as though they liked it, and at ten o'clock they trotted off with us all night, while we slept, or dozed, or smoked, or looked over our toes at the moonlight. Before dawn we reached Anuraj-pura, and I strolled about till the sun rose, to see what sort of a sun grew here. I found it a hot one, and went to bed.

We gave two days to seeing ruins, and, as far as concerns the ruins, it was more than enough for my wants. The art strikes me as pretty poor and done to order at so much a square yard. I thought it showed my church to be here a mercantile speculation from the start, but perhaps it was only a mercantile purchase. At any rate, the work looked like contract work, taken by foreign contractors at the cheapest rate. Sometimes the thing is very well done indeed, but this is in single stones, and always has the look of our own best work; that is, of being done to order by a mechanical workman. One hungered for a blunder. Considering how old it is, this sort of thing annoyed me. La Farge, who is much less easily disturbed by disappointment than I am, would be more charitable, and see more to admire in it; but to me the only

interesting remains in the place were not Buddhist at all, but a very old rock-temple of Brahma, where the artists had made some really well-felt attempts to please and honor their favorite deity Siva — either him or some other incarnation, I think it matters little what. I regret to say that artistically, in Ceylon, unlike Japan, Buddha is a bore; and a big one. More than that, he always was a bore. Don't tell W. S. B. !!! Still, Anurajpura is quite a place to have seen; and I was glad to sit for an hour under Buddha's Bo-tree, and attain Perfection as he did — though La Farge, who is very severe on me, says I didn't. Anyway we sat there, under the tree which is twenty-three hundred years old; and pretty sad, sordid, and miserable is the outlook from that special standpoint of human perfectibility. Nothing remains but a mean native village, a ruined enclosure, and a yellow-robed priest looking as wicked as Buddhist priests in Ceylon seem alone able to do. We went round six miles or so of ruins, remains of at least six huge temples with all their costly outfit like a big mediæval Abbey or Monastery; beautiful stone tanks with admirable stone stairways down into them; generally double, one

for women, and big as your classical Frog-pond; but built so cheaply that the long sides have crumpled in. The best things I saw were, to my mind, just stone doorways standing in the jungle, all alone, and a family of chattering monkeys jumping from tree to tree across the road, before our sacred ox-cart, in which La Farge and I, seated, like Kushna and Siva, on red-cushioned chairs, were dragged at a solemn walk through the woods.

We started back one Sunday evening, after having had the dancers do a dance for us. These dancers were all men; low-caste, but I did not learn what caste; and their dancing was wholly unlike any we have seen before. I should rather like to see more of it, not because it is particularly pleasing, but because it is to me a new style, and I am curious to know more of it; but I guess, from their jumping and whirling, that it is more Arabic than oriental. The dancers wore arm-plates of brass, and other ornaments, and were not ill-looking men. Nothing could be more native, for I imagine that these particular dancers can have come into as little contact with whites as any Ceylonese alive. I know that we came into no contact with whites as long as we were

in the district, for there were none to contact on. The only extensive population seemed to be jackals. Our little oxen, as pretty as angels, jingled us all night back to Kikiria, where we took tea at the rest-house at four o'clock in the morning; and as we sat on the porch in the dark, we could hear nothing but the creak of an ox-mill grinding oil, and the almost continuous cry of the jackals from the jungle. Really a jackal's cry is worth hearing; it is an ideally lost soul; a soul in pain; creepy and wailing; sadder than despair, and quite clearly proof of the Buddhist doctrine of metempsychosis, for no Christian animal has a right to cry like that unless he has lost something quite unusual.

We got back to Kandy all right, and very charming Kandy is. I took to morning walks, an hour or two before breakfast which was at half-past nine o'clock; and in all my short experience of the world I have never met walks so beautiful as those about Kandy. They have, too, the advantage of being broad and gravelled and cared-for, so that if a cobra happens to be taking his morning walk at the same time with you, you need not offend him by treading on his tail. This is a real advan-

tage to me, for I do not like cobras. Some people seem to think a cobra only a snake, and speak trivially of him; but to me, a cobra is what he was to the Brahmin and Hindus, clearly a snake-deity; and when he stands up and flattens his neck and sways about, he looks to me forty feet high, with a mission to civilise Europe and America. I have never met a wild one, and in my walks I took sufficient care not to do so, for the harmless snakes here are quite numerous and big enough to satisfy me; but I saw enough captive ones to appreciate their qualities, and I not only understand why the cobra is worshipped, but I am quite prepared to worship him myself rather than have any misunderstanding with him. I don't feel so about the elephant, who is a dear good fellow, and when I meet him taking his bath in a stream, and he comes up to suggest that I might give him a banana or a cocoanut, I never feel as though he were a deity or his trunk a civiliser, though he is carved all over every temple in India; but the cobra is another story altogether, and has a human air of condensed venom and power such as would make the fortune of a newspaper-editor.

We sent for a snake-charmer at Colombo who sat on the floor and let his cobra walk about our legs in a way that struck me as awkward even if his fangs were out, which the fellow pretended they were not; but he was much too splendid to do tricks, and, after intimating the clearest willingness to kill us, retired into his basket and shut up. The conjuror did some clever tricks, including the mango-trick which all travellers tell about, and which he offered to teach me in fifteen minutes. I declined, preferring not to know too much, for the trick was clever as it stood; the fellow's bare, skinny arms and body offering no place for concealment, while we sat round and over him, almost touching him, so as to see every motion that was not too quick to be seen at all. I cannot conceive how he did it; but I never could see how the simplest sleight-of-hand is done.

We came down to Colombo to take the English steamer of the 17th, but ultimately took the French steamer of the 21st, the Djemnah, which should land us in Marseilles in ten days. We have had a pleasant voyage so far. The Indian Ocean was in very good humor, and though I am now seasick if the

water looks at me, I got on very well except one day when the ship rolled once or twice. Apparently everyone hereabouts who affects style travels by the French Messageries steamers, and they are certainly much pleasanter when one is well. When ill, I think I prefer the English. The Djemnah is not large or fast, but we jog on, about 13½ miles an hour, and gradually get over a good many thousand miles. Passengers get to know each other a little, and to dislike each other a little more. One grows used to a temperature over 90°. We have stopped at Aden; in two days we shall get to the canal. Already I look on our journey as ended, for we are in the beaten track.

*October* 8

We were stuck a whole day in the Suez Canal. A steamer ahead of us ran aground, and had to discharge cargo. Then we passed Sunday at Port Said, which is a hole such as words won't express. To-day we are just half-way between Sicily and Corsica. To-morrow afternoon we hope to reach Marseilles, and by Sunday (11th) we should get to Paris. After four months' steady travel,

and fifteen thousand miles of ocean, I ought to be glad to get anywhere; but I don't really feel puffed by the prospect. Our voyage since leaving Brisbane has been so charming that I am spoiled. Never a day when the weather was not fair, and generally quite exquisite; a sea almost motionless for ten thousand miles; constant change, and most of the time near, strange and fascinating lands; for the first time in my life I have learned what an ideal journey is. Luckily there is no other like it, and can't be. If there were, I should start on it as soon as I could get my teeth put in order. As there is not, I must first get La Farge comfortably started for home, and then I will read my letters, and think what next. On reaching Marseilles I shall mail this letter at once so that you may know of my safe arrival. At Paris I shall get something from you, no doubt, and then will start fresh. Love to you all.

VII

*Tillypronie, Tarland, Aberdeenshire*
*Sunday, 15 Nov.* 1891

WHEN did I last write? I have quite forgotten. When did you last write? I don't remember. Never mind. I've no doubt it's all right, and probably when I return to London a week hence I shall find news of you. Just now I am way way up in Scotland, perched high on the hills, and the mountains roundabout are sprinkled with snow; rather a violent contrast to the sort of thing you have had from me of late. I wish I knew where I should be when I write next; perhaps in the south of France, or Spain. I have very vague notions about it.

La Farge and I reached Paris a little more than a month ago, and I came over to England with the Camerons three weeks afterwards, while La Farge went to visit his cousins in Brittany. He stayed there so long that I had left London when he came over, and he sailed, or I suppose he sailed, in the Britannic last Thursday without my seeing him again. I telegraphed good-bye on the chance. The Camerons all went home on the

4th. So I am now alone, making a few country visits to old friends, and wondering what I shall do next. My conscience tells me to go to India. Duty requires me to go to Central Asia. Laziness whispers to stay in England. As a compromise, I think of the south of Europe. Pleasure suggests a run home for the spring, to see you. Really I am waiting for some one to take me by the coat-collar and order me to follow him.

Paris was rather amusing in a way, as it always is, but I can't stand Paris long. The solitude of it kills me. England is better. London is really tolerable when the fog is thick enough and it rains. At a pinch I can always return there and be fairly comfortable. Some of you might come over and take care of me. A few months of London would rather do me good, and get some of the sunlight of the South Seas out of me, but really a good Scotch moor in November, with plenty of rain and a cold raw wind, is quite the pleasantest thing I know; and if you could only see what wonderful things dear Lady Clark gives us to eat, you would agree with me. She has quite the nicest table I ever saw; far better than the best French

restaurant because it is so varied and everything so *soigné*, as the French say. The Clarks are an example to me. They live up here on the edge of the moors all the year round, and know everything that takes place in the world, and read all the new books, and know all the new Americans, and keep the best house, and have the best things to eat, and all without much money or display. Before coming here I passed a week at my Abbey in Shropshire. You would be delighted with this. It is a very old ruin dating way back to Norman times. The place is a very quiet valley in Shropshire where nothing new has been seen for three hundred years except a little branch railroad which has about three trains a day and runs through quiet little hamlets to nowhere in particular. The Abbey Church is a ruin with some interesting bits, especially the Chapter House; but the Abbot's House is still preserved with little change, and is a pretty piece of Tudor Gothic. Here I have been in the habit of hiding myself whenever I have been in England for five-and-twenty years or more. One of my oldest friends, named Milnes Gaskell, is the owner, and I have been staying with

him and his wife, Lady Catherine, and their little daughter about ten years old. The weather was pretty bad, very dark, gloomy, wet and cold, but we managed to be out a great deal on foot or horseback, for they mounted me on a pony, and I trotted about after their big hunters through more mud than I ever saw before, across fields and through lanes, till I have got to wonder what makes English people so very fond of marshes. One day we had a meet of the hounds and as my pony and her rider were not very fit for fences, I capered about the fields till lunch-time when Lady Catherine and I rode home. We had hardly dismounted at the Abbey gate when a lot of hounds came along and started a fox in the ruin, under our eyes, and killed him in the garden. He was a civil fox, and probably did it because he knew me to be a stranger.

Last Sunday I spent with my old friend Mrs. Chamberlain at Birmingham. You know she was Mary Endicott, and was one of my Washington girls. She is now the head of a great house near Birmingham, and looks younger and fresher than ever. She seems to be very happy, and was very sweet to me.

Her husband, remembering my taste for winter-gardens, showed me carefully through all his greenhouses, and especially the orchid-houses, which are very fascinating. He has just what I would like to have, a sort of tropical island connected with his house, and filled with palms, ferns, orchids, chrysanthemums, and so on. The hothouses are warmed by three or four hot-water boilers, and lighted by electricity. When I am rich, I will build another house on the same scheme and grow roses and orchids all winter for a living. Perhaps you will come and be gardener. The gardeners curl the chrysanthemum petals for dinner. You would like this part of the work which is light and chatty.

Otherwise I have nothing in special to tell you except that Lady Clark has a dear little terrier that reminds me of Possum in his best days, and comes to see me in the morning when I am dressing, and curls up in the bed.

I return to London, next week, as I have already told you, and wish I had something to do there. As it is I am destined to a Paris dentist, and dread further movements.

VIII

1603 *H Street*
6 *October*, 1894

My dear Infant

I don't know that I gain much by calling you infant, for you are all as old as the hills, and fit to be my grandmothers, but these habits of childhood are as sticky as sugar, and we never know ourselves or our infants. How are you anyway? Your letter the other day gave me a sort of an idea that you are so as to practise fair ball. Are you going to get another licking at football this year? I never could make out how you could be so clever as to get licked last year. You must have put real genius into discovering how not to win.

At times, though, I suppose you do feel a little bored with victories, so I don't blame you, as long as you're not bored by other things, which is worse than being licked. You ought to have been with us in the Yellowstone country this summer. If it weren't for the name of travelling, I call almost every sort of travel pretty hard work, and mountain travel in a region unknown to man

is apt to be mighty hard work. I wonder where you would have come out, and how many cañons you would have tumbled into. I wanted you there to sketch for me. I was quite sick in spirit that I could not catch a tone of the country, for it was American to the very snow. I was amused to find that when I went round through Canada to see the Selkirk glacier, it turned out to be distinctly European — very fine indeed, but not in the least like the American. I wanted awfully to be an artist to see if I could make anything out of the American ideal, which is like the American woman — not suited to pictorial or plastic art. I believe you could do it better than I, for I am too American myself, and have no juices.

As for your painting, it's no good except for yourself; — or me, perhaps; — anyway, it is a personal amusement like sleeping or eating or playing golf, or catching trout. As long as it gives you pleasure, it's worth while. The moment you conceive it as a public duty, it is a bore. And from the instant it is made a show, or a mercantile profession, it is a horror almost as bad as a church. Art and religion are really states of mind. They

become bric-à-brac the moment they are made a show. They may be good bric-à-brac, or bad; and anyway the bric-à-brac is all there is to that stage of so-called civilisation; but as long as it is bric-à-brac it is dead art — or religion — and for your personal state of mind, either religious or artistic, you must have it alive. I believe no one but Antony and Cleopatra ever found amusement in catching dead fish. So by all means don't paint unless it is a great pleasure, and burn all you do unless it gives you some sort of pleasure. I do not mean pleasure of the brain — critical, analytical, or generally intellectual. I mean the pleasure of a state of mind, such as one ought to have in seeing good dancing, or running water, or a very fresh glass of Brut Champagne at the end of an August day when one is half dead of thirst.

I should send for half a dozen of you if I knew my own mind. King as usual has gone back on me, and is not going to the West Indies. I shall go alone, but when or exactly where, I do not know. For one or two reasons, I am dawdling here from day to day. When I do go, I've a sort of an idea of visiting the islands — Martinique, etc., down to

Barbadoes; then coasting the Spanish mainland to Colon at the Isthmus of Panama; then coasting to Vera Cruz, and running up to the City of Mexico; then returning through Vera Cruz to Havana, and settling down for the winter at Saint Iago; but I want first to hear from my friends the Ramsdens at Saint Iago about the house.

Learn bicycling and teach me. I am dying to ride.

## IX

*Paris*, 1 *Sept.* '95

Two days ago, on arriving here, I got Looly's and Fanny's letters, which gave me all the news in the world, or at least all I am likely to get, for no one else writes. By the time you get this, summer will be waning. My own passage is taken for October 12, and by the 20th I hope to be running the house at Washington. . . .

Mrs. Lodge and I are going out shopping, and we shall try to find the linen that Maggy wants. In London I bought a warehouse of furniture and glass for her. She devours tables and chairs by herds. I don't believe all five of you wear out as much furniture as I

do. I found some rather nice things at Gregory's and was extravagant, so that I will bust your paw yet.

I forgot my travels. Where did I leave off? At Tillypronie, I think, near a month ago. I left poor Lady Clark very-very broken. When I rejoined the Lodges in London the town was deserted and we had a week of it without society or gossip. I think I managed to do all I wanted, or at least all I had jotted in my memoranda, but I left to the last the decision whether you girls were to have solitaire pearl necklaces or ruby diadems. Of course you are too old for diamonds, and they are too common. Perhaps you had better decide for yourselves next year, on the spot.

We all left London on Sunday, the 18th, and, with lovely weather, crossed to Amiens where we passed Monday in the Cathedral. Of course I had been there often, but it is always newer and more wonderful every time, and it never seemed so fresh as now, or so marvellously perfect. Then we went on to Rouen and passed Wednesday there, also on old ground, but interesting, and we might well have stayed longer. We kept on

then to Caen, Thursday, which was new to me, and full of William the Conqueror and his buildings. On Friday we stopped some hours at Bayeux to see Matilda's tapestry and another early church; and we had time at Saint-Lo to bag another curious early Cathedral, still reaching Coutances in time to see the sunset from the top of the Cathedral there.

We thought Coutances the most charming of all these places, but perhaps it was only a surprise. The Norman Cathedral there was something quite new to me, and humbled my proud spirit a good bit. I had not thought myself so ignorant or so stupid as to have remained blind to such things, being more or less within sight of them now for nearly forty years. I thought I knew Gothic. Caen, Bayeux, and Coutances were a chapter I never opened before, and which pleased my jaded appetite. They are austere. They have, outside, little of the vanity of Religion. Inside, they are worked with a feeling and a devotion that turns even Amiens green with jealousy. I knew before pretty well all that my own life and time was worth, but I never before felt quite so utterly stood

on, as I did in the Cathedral at Coutances. Amiens has mercy. Coutances is above mercy itself. The squirming devils under the feet of the stone Apostles looked uncommonly like me and my generation.

On Saturday we came on to Mont Saint Michel, among a mob of tourists. About Mont Saint Michel I can say little because it is too big. It is the Church Militant, but if Coutances expressed the last—or first—word of Religion, as an emotion of self-abasement, Mont Saint Michel lifted one up to a sort of Sir Galahad in its mixture of sword and cross. We passed two days there, in the most abominable herd of human hogs I ever saw at the trough of a table-d'hôte, but the castle was worth many hogs. When Rafael painted Saint Michael flourishing his big sword over Satan, he thought no doubt that he had done a good bit of religious painting, but the Norman architecture makes even Rafael vulgar. The Saint Michael of the Mount is as big as Orion and his sword must be as high as Sirius, if Sirius in these days has any Faith, which may be doubted; and if stars anyway are of any use, which is more questionable still, both stars and swords being now

better understood, or more antiquated, than in the eleventh century. So we bade good-bye to Sir Galahad Saint Michael, on Monday, with the proud thought that we could smash him with one cannon-ball, or the gold resources of a single Wall Street Bank, and we rode and we rode and we hunted and we hollowed till we came to Vitré to sleep, and there too we saw what is left of a very old town, and walls, above a green valley, and a great Castle of the Tremoilles, grands seigneurs s'il en fût; and the old Château of Mme. de Sévigné, a few miles off, untouched, and for all the world exactly like our Scotch castles. From Vitré to Le Mans, with another Cathedral; and, last of all, two long hours at Chartres on a lovely summer afternoon, with the sun flaming behind Saint Anne, David, Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar, and the rest, in the great windows of the north transept. No austerity there, inside or out, except in the old south tower and spire which still protests against mere humanity. I've a notion that you saw Chartres, and know all about it. If so, I can drop it. If not, I hope to take you there. Of course I studied the windows, if only for La Farge's sake, and

tried to understand their makers. On the whole, as a combination of high merits, religious and spiritual; artistic, as architecture; technical, as engineering; for color, form, and thought; for elevation of idea and successful subordination of detail; I suppose Chartres is now the finest thing in the world. At least that would be my guess; but I've no confidence in it; and if you say you prefer Saint Paul's or Saint Peter's, so let it be. It does not matter much now-a-days. I believe a vast majority prefers the Houses of Parliament and the State Department at Washington. You can take your own line.

The same evening we came on to Paris, and here we are: Hôtel des deux Mondes, Avenue de l'Opéra. Mr. and Mrs. Lodge, the two boys, and I, occupying one apartment. We have not quarrelled or differed, and our journey since leaving New York has been highly successful. I hope they have enjoyed it as much as I have. I find the Cunliffes here, which is another joy to me. The Luces also, our other sister, are here, and two thousand million Americans sitting at every café, with penetrating voices proclaiming that they only wish they were in New York. I wish

they were, and I further still, for I love Paris only so very little that I would not quite utterly destroy it, as I would destroy London; but would leave the Louvre, and Notre Dame, and the Café Riche or Véfour's. The only real objection I have to France is that there is no good Champagne in it. Otherwise it is a tolerable place enough, except for the Jews and Americans.

Now I have written you a very long letter, and must finish my coffee and dress, or some one will come in. Give my love to paw, and to Martha and Hitty and Elsie and all the other brats.

X

*Paris*, 23 *Sept.* 1895

I HAVE letters from you down to the 11th, which is fairly up to date. You will have to answer this to Washington, as I sail on the 12th. The Lodges go south to-morrow, and leave me here alone in this wild and wicked world. I shall go over to London next week.

The weather is still superb; the country parched to a cinder; and the temperature as high as in July. We have passed a week at

Tours, visiting countless ruins, and seeing all the things I ought to have seen thirty years ago. The Châteaux and Castles are pretty much given up to American tourists now, and one is led about by a string, and herded like a sheep, which is not conducive to romantic meditation, even with the help of Stanley J. Weyman; but anyway I should not have taken as much pleasure in Touraine as I did in Normandy. On the other hand I know that you babbling shrimps would delight in it. Some of the Châteaux, like Chaumont and Azay-le-Rideau and Langeais, are still lived in, and are charming, especially Chaumont. I saw only one first-rate bit of architecture; which is the famous staircase and court of the Château of Blois. This is, I suppose, the best thing in Renaissance that the French did. Whenever you come here again, you must see it, and Chaumont and Amboise. I do not think the rest matters much. You would be amused by Chinon and Loches, but they are military castles, and like plenty of others. Chenonceaux is now owned by a Cuban named Terry, and shut up. Chambord is big and heavy. For a pure worldly, wicked, and gilded architecture, you can take

the staircase at Blois for the best, and need go no further. The Louvre comes next. Both are only fragments.

On the whole, Touraine seems to me to have had too much said about it. The whole thing, packed together and doubled several times in merit, would not approach the value of any one of the great northern Cathedrals. The country is a monotonous chalk level. The Loire is chiefly sand-spits. The history is revolting and the associations all bad. Louis the Eleventh, and Francis the First, and Catherine of Medici, are not beautiful to look at. I prefer the glass windows in the Cathedral at Tours.

When you come back to France, if I'm not with you, hire a château somewhere, grow grapes for a living, get acquainted with the gentry, and do the neighborhood quietly as you did the Deeside. You will find it very cheap, and very amusing. With five or six thousand dollars a year, you could be swells, and if you would join the Catholic church you would be absolutely ancienne noblesse, and could set up as saints and at least peeresses of France. I want Looly to try it with me. I never saw a country better suited for out-

door life. It is something like Pennsylvania, and the people are the most industrious, well-to-do, good-looking, economical peasantry I ever saw. I can go about everywhere on a bicycle. You can have one of the new automatic carriages. We will grow our own fruit and make our own wine, eat our own chickens and get La Farge to put up a commemorative window for us, with paw and Cousin Sturgis, and me, and all you five, kneeling in a row, very small, in the big window of the Cathedral at Tours. On the whole I think this the best idea I have yet had for our declining years. See that Looly takes it in.

In spite of all its drawbacks, France has, still, more to give one than any other country has, that I know. Outside of Paris and the manufacturing cities, life seems still quite possible. The French are, to be sure, rather too intelligent, which cannot be said of any other people, and they understand their own difficulties too well, which is also an occasional drawback to felicity; but they have lots of variety and still some few broken vestiges and traditions of art. They do not get on my nerves as the Germans and English do. Their faults are those of children, and I can make

allowance for them. They lie, but they do not cant, which is the infallible sign of a German race. They are still a little mediæval and unequal. Virtue and vice live together, saints and sinners, as they did in the middle ages, in contrast, each in its fullest form. They have not yet averaged down to the mercantile level. I admit that the Boston standard is better, and quite the highest that ever has existed outside Paradise; but the mediæval contrasts were more amusing, and I do dearly love a female saint. She is so quaint.

Saint Louisa would look very nicely on a glass window. She would convert her wicked uncle, who does nothing but rob and murder; and would make him build a church and feed chickens ever afterwards.

I see nothing at all here that you girls can want, unless it is clothes. The fashions for the Bois and America strike me as being exaggerated and vulgar as ever, but on Sundays, in the street-cars and the Luxembourg Gardens and the river steamers, I see occasionally pretty dresses, and sometimes pretty women, not exaggerated, and not even painted, as all the women in London are, from the Princess of Wales downward. I should say

that the fashions among the *peuple* here were rather nice, but as I am generally without instruction on these occasions, I don't feel sure.

Everything in Paris is as dear as in New York, and I should think no better. My linen will come to the same thing.

XI

1603 *H Street*
*Monday*, 30 *Dec*r

DEAR INFANT

Thanks for the telegram and letter. Now winter has shown its hand, and this morning the trees are white with snow, and the thermom. stands just at 32°. So you got home in bare time. I am lonely without you, and miss having mumps or bronchitis or cholera upstairs to give comfort to a happy home; but one can't expect to have all the pleasures of life together. One must never expect too much, either of mumps or mugwumps, but you can tell Looly that if she too has "that tired feeling," and a fresh stock of mumps — or mugwumps — she had better take the next train, like Fanny, and try a change. Tell her that she won't see much more of her dear uncle, who is tottering very rapidly to his vener-

able grave, and whose senility has at last become too evident for disguise, but who is more restless than ever, and is only kept here by chance and the dear Major in the hope he can help to do harm to somebody. The moment he sees that the Major can be trusted to do all necessary harm without help, that moment your avuncular wreck will sink beyond the horizon; — so, Miss Ludovica, — hurry up!

We are beginning to boil here, already, — or, at least, to simmer. But, as for me, I read Byzantine history, and the early Christians. Love to you all.

XII

1603 *H Street*
12 *Jan.* '97

Your letter of day before yesterday comes at a moment when I have nothing to do that distracts me from reflecting on the auspicious merits of my nieces; for, unlike your friend, I do not see their defects if they have any, and never can understand the advantage of discovering faults in those one loves. The only effect that I ever perceived from being told my faults was to make them worse by

adding self-consciousness; and as all of us Bostonians naturally suffer from self-consciousness and shyness as our peculiar and besetting fault, we gain little by increasing it. . . .

I am glad you are interested in your art-school, though the same danger lurks there. One learns just enough of professional methods to disgust one with one's own limitations. The professional artist is a fraud of the worst kind in that respect. He labors to root out amateurishness, and yet he is himself the most miserable of amateurs, or worse, when he undertakes seriously to rival real artists. Not one has a sense of color; almost none has a sense of line; never a picture or a figure is *felt;* and in both the Paris salons you may seek a whole season to find a work of art that is more than clever. The greatest artist's greatest art is to imitate naïveté, like Puvis, or to be superhabile like Sargent. A third-rate Rembrandt knocks the stuffing out of all the picture-exhibitions of Europe and America combined.

Still, nothing matters much, and as you want only amusement, perhaps you will find as much of it in the art-school as out of it.

Anyway, one's freshness must soon fade in our dry intellectual atmosphere, and faded freshness is a very stale thing. So I suppose we must cultivate what the world cultivates, and try to wear our tailor-made clothes as though they were imperial purple. Thanks to La Farge, you will hardly forget what color is, and when one's eye has once learned to see color and line, one does not easily lose the sense. Sometimes I feel even a feeble suspicion that the times are drifting us back towards a certain revival of our senses. . . .

Meanwhile we go on here with more than our usual inanities, and I have for once had a good deal more to think about than I like. You need not be anxious about Cuba. Of all the elements, Cuba alone is all right. It is not Cuba that is in danger, but Spain, and even Spain is not in so bad a way as our own dear Major and the republican party. Beneath the surface here, all intelligent men are uncommonly uneasy about the Major's evident weakness, and his interminable list of failures to run even his own petty Ohio jobs, for which the whole business of the country is kept waiting. Neither does the noble Olney improve matters, whose temper

has got him into inextricable scrapes, and whose manners are not worse than his morals. Also, the venerable Sherman is mixing things up with a pernicious activity almost as destructive as his total loss of memory and sequence. Altogether, we are aghast, and know not where to turn. No one gives a thought to public policy. No one wants to face the responsibilities of office. Quarrels of the bitterest sort are breaking out in every direction, and the chance grows daily smaller that McKinley can control legislation or even local feuds and bosses.

Optimist that I am, never had I thought that things would be so mixed up within only a couple of months of election; but fortunately it is not my funeral, and, like Messrs. Hanna, Dingley, Allison, Sherman, Lodge, Reed, and Hay, I am not asking for office, nor even for a job. I have no henchmen to feed at the public crib. But I do not like the outlook, and I wonder how long our crazy modern society can stand up between its own feebleness and its diseases. Perhaps you will some day know, but I guess I'm out of it.

Pleasant letters from Brooks and Daisy housekeeping in Paris.

XIII

1603 *H Street*
28 *Jany.* 1897

YOUR letter, my dear fellow, and your study for the "Dance" have arrived and brought joy, as your fellowship always does; but I say to you, as I say to Helen when she brings me a sonnet: — What am I that I should criticise, and where was I when the foundations of your art were laid? Who am I that should bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or teach the horse to say Ha! Ha! — I can no more do the things you do for fun, than I could tell the peacocks how their goodly wings should be made, or instruct the ostrich how to bring up her young; a duty which the Lord seems to have thought incumbent on men of a certain age and position in the world. (Job XXXIX, 13–18.) So I leave to the Professor on duty the task of repeating the usual commonplaces which have worn many generations threadbare, and which were the outcome of a society already beginning to rot. Old Professor Channing before my time is said to have criticised themes by advising the students to begin by striking out whatever

they thought good. If the criticism was a bad one, it condemned the Professor; if good, it condemned the natural instincts and tastes of the students and their time. Now-a-days we have got to the point that we must not be elated or cast down! Of the two commonplaces I prefer Channing's, which has at least a Puritanic and positive flavor. Following the same line, you should not, as an habitual thing, have green eyes or a turn-up nose, and above all you must have blue hair.

Your study for "Dancing" certainly has not the freshness of the open air; but that is not your fault. It smells of the studio and the lamp; but that is why it exists. It has none of that fine, free, careless rapture of the thrush which sings because it is fun to make fun of us. Only here and there in it I see bits which remind me of you, and movements which suggest yourself rather than somebody else. As these will be things that the school will inevitably condemn and strike out, I will not say what they are. Nothing absolutely annoys me in the sketch, and although of course the school always begins by abolishing color,— that being the only essential element in paint, — and thereby deprives you of your chief

natural advantage, still you have instinctively struggled to recover what you could of your paralysed strength by using light and shade as boldly as you dared. By and by they will take that out of you, too, and you will do the whole thing right, without being elated or depressed, which is what we all hope for in Nirvana and Boston.

Well! Nothing matters much! If you were to be professional, I should highly approve your working close down to the conventional school standard, which probably represents the nearest practicable compromise between art and existing society, just as the common-school stands between knowledge and shop-keeping. As you study for pleasure, and will find as much pleasure in conventionalities as in eccentricities, the training of the school will be an experience, and that is apparently all that life is, since society has lost its hold on an ultimate ideal. So go ahead by all means and make what pleasure out of it you can, and, if possible, learn for your own happiness to believe in Harvard College and Metropolitan Art-schools. After all, from the point of view of true imagination and pure art, I do not know that Titian and Rembrandt

are less mercantile than Sargent and Carolus. I find no real peace short of the windows at Chartres and the mosaics at Torcello and Murano. So you have a wide field to caper in, as far as my feelings affect you.

As I am writing not in the character of uncle, but as a fellow-student and general companion to owls, like my master Job, you will do well not to be excited or depressed by my remarks, but read what Job's companions said to him, and play it's me. The Lord can then straighten us all out to suit him.

I seem to have little news to send you from here. Winter has at last set in solid, and I hibernate like a cinnamon bear — not being a grizzly or a brown, but just a poor ornery yaller bear. As I remarked before, Helen communicates to me an occasional sonnet, and Hay an occasional secret; both of which amuse me. My Cubans have won their fight. Canovas and Cleveland, their two chief enemies, are now broken to pieces, and will probably go out together, which will settle the result, although the situation in Cuba may remain as it is for an indefinite time. My object is to make another Santo Domingo or Colombia of it, so as to shut out

Mr. Havemeyer and the New York and Boston civilisation. Thus far we have wonderfully succeeded.

Mr. McKinley is already flatter than cakes in a pan, and the election of a Populist-Silver-Democrat in 1900 is as inevitable as any future event ever can be. . . .

XIV

1603 *H Street*
25 *March*, 1897

YOUR letter of the 14th has this moment arrived. You were at Milan with Saint Ambrosius, the only interesting man or thing I ever heard of in Milan; and, like the fool I am, I never knew him till last summer. You must next time go out to the Certosa, by way of seeing real Italian work. . . .

So, you will be now in Rome and hear the watch-dogs bay beyond the Tiber, and of distant centinels the fitful cry, &c, &c, as per Byron, who did in fact say the best things about Rome that ever have been said. Lots of people have talked, too, and some have talked well; but of Rome, as in Rome, there is almost nothing of the very first quality. Even the Michael Angelos and the Vatican

marbles do not appeal to me as intensely as the Slave or the Venus of Milo in the Louvre, and Byron's description of the Gladiator is finer than the Gladiator himself. Roman architecture is very far from the first class. Saint Peter's reeks of money and infidelity. The best things are always Michael Angelo and the Campagna, and the view from the Vatican towards the Alban hills. There I find peace and space, and sense of finite failure, which is the soul of Rome. For, in abstract, Rome merely tells of the two first failures of western civilisation: one political, the other spiritual; and the third and last — the material or economical — is there only in the vulgar ruin of a contractor's building-speculation. The imperial and the papal failures have a certain pathos and dignity; but even these never catch my breath like the pathos of Chartres and Coutances, or the dignity of Mont Saint Michel. I feel always as cool as Gibbon did when "in the gloom of evening, as I sat musing on the Capitol, while the bare-footed fryars were chanting their litanies in the temple of Jupiter," he first thought of writing his very Roman and cold-blooded history.

But out on the Campagna thirty or forty years ago, in May, on horseback, among the fever-stricken peasants, and the wild-looking wallowing buffalo, and the ruined acqueducts, and the peculiar depth of the atmosphere and richness of the shadows to eyes that could then feel tones of shade, Rome was not half bad. I envy you. Tell me how it feels.

I expect to be at Brown's Hotel in Dover Street before night on the 21st, but direct to Barings or the Embassy. I chance it on your address.

XV

*Brown's Hotel, London, W.*
*Sunday, May 2, '97*

MY DEAR AND ONLY SHRIMP

Your letter yesterday was rather a relief, for I began to fear that something was wrong. Of course, *I* am wrong — always — and expect others to be so — occasionally, — but just now I am more than usually, if possible, a wreck, and the idea of five — no! seven — nieces in Florence with nothing the matter with them, overwhelms me with the weight of the world's wickedness. I wish I were

with you there, for I loathe London and Londoners, and we could amuse ourselves pleasantly on the Arno. That Rome and Michael Angelo should at first knock one silly, is proof of sense. The world contains only one or two great tragic motives in the historical drama, and Rome concentrates them, as Michael does, so that they strike any-one with imagination almost a physical blow. Florence is not tragic at all, and in spite of Dante and all the rest, never counts for a tragic motive. It is not quite as fat and gross as the Touraine. Boccaccio is not quite as frankly swinish as Balzac. But Florence was always mercantile; — never imperial or spiritual; — and I think that was really what worried Dante. I feel it even in the mosaic marbling of the Campanile; and the Penseroso seems to me to be pondering what it means. Evidently he is in a mess, and cannot for his life understand it. So I think Michael felt in Florence that his style of art was out of place, as Dante's was in the earlier time. Florence is a place to play in. Tuscany always was peaceful, fat and sensual. You see it in the decorations of the early tombs, and Vergil taunts the Etrurians in the Æneid

with caring for nothing but wine and music and love-making. They never fought or prayed hard even in play, and one can sit down with the Medicis safe against pretty nearly all social annoyances except perhaps an occasional dose of poison, which has always been rather the correct social remedy and substitute for the sword and nasty chopping of heads. Venice is still more so, and, to my mind, too much so. Florence is a pleasant medium between the shop and the camp and the court. It has just a fair share of all, and just enough religion to be graceful. . . .

XVI

20 *Feb*$^{y}$. '98

Your last letter, my dear infant, written Jan$^{y}$. 24, nearly a month ago, caught me just as we were leaving Luxor on our way up to Assouan. This morning we started back from Assouan and shall reach Luxor again this evening or to-morrow morning. So our Nile voyage is finished, as far as we set out to go, and, long before this letter reaches you, we shall, if nothing interferes, have turned our backs on Egypt, and our faces to Syria. . . .

Of adventure, the Nile now offers about

as much chance as a Florida boarding-house. One does the usual temples, and, by way of a change, one resorts to the usual tombs. An hour or two on a donkey makes one curious to try a camel, and five minutes on a camel makes one contented for life with a donkey. Egypt interests me always, of course, but that is because it is a kind of compendium or Century Dictionary of History, and I get the cosmos in a nut-shell here. Rome fades off into a passing blizzard; western civilisation becomes a rather gross misapprehension; and even oriental enormities count only as more or less labored variations on an originally simple theme. Egypt is an education, but it is a sort of education that, for Americans, is worse than useless. No form of western thought can live in so dry an atmosphere. So the American very wisely comes here to pass his time, and carries away as little as possible of the education. What good can it do him to learn that his special form of ephemeris is on the whole not sufficiently original or ornamental to be worth existing at all?

So the American goes his way and disappears as so many other travelling races have done, rather more idly than the rest, and

Egypt does him no harm. With the Englishman, the case is different, and interests me greatly. What Cambyses did, and Alexander the Great, and Julius Cæsar, and Mahomet, and what Saint Louis tried to do, and what was the highest effort of Napoleon's genius — in short, what has been the object of all the greatest men known in history — England in her turn has undertaken. She has saddled and bridled the Sphinx and is riding her at full speed according to the rules of her manège. She has straddled the road to the East, and holds her position against all comers. She has repeated what was the great achievement of Alexander the Great, and has done it, after her own manner, without producing either an Alexander or any other man above the intellectual level of an average railway president. The Englishmen who are now ruling Egypt tell me that they have done it against the will of their government, forced into it by the fact that it was impossible to do anything else. The contrast of mind and method is so curious that I watch the Englishmen much as I like to watch an ant's nest. Poor old Napoleon told his soldiers that from the top of yonder pyramids

forty centuries looked down on them. For once, he did not exaggerate. Perhaps he might more exactly have doubled the number. Anyway, to-day, one more century, which makes $x + 1$ centuries, looks down on Evelyn Baring, and sees Napoleon and Cæsar and Alexander, all rolled in one, a reincarnation that would have startled Osiris, not to speak of Pasht the cat and Thoth the monkey, into a grin, as it does me. We have worked out at last into the ultimate mathematics of the Bank of England, and can stop.

This disquisition may serve to amuse you for a minute or two, when you are sleepy. The truth is, I have very, very little to say. Socially we are almost wholly confined to our own party. Hay asks everybody to dinner, but there is nobody to come. The venerable President Angell, our minister at Constantinople, and his wife, came once. Ham Fish and his wife and a Miss Smith Cliff, came once. A Mr. and Mrs. Dawkins and Lady Edward Cecil came once. This is all, and none of them were more than fleeting joys. Whether other social pleasures are reserved to us, I rather doubt. Possibly at Cairo we may see some one, but people are already

flying northwards; winter is over, or soon will be, and the eternal summer-question will turn up again for settlement by the time we can set our feet in Christian soil once more. As far as I know, among the travellers here this winter, there is no one eager to love me.

*Luxor.* 21st

A HOT day at last. We have been out to ruins and tombs all the morning; Medinet Abou, the Ramasseum and what not; surrounded by men and boys with scarabs and mummies to sell; some of them wonderfully good and genuine, which they were at least eager to throw at me for a few cents, but really I do not collect mummies and a few, very few scarabs suffice. All the same, wonderfully good things can still be bought here for little or nothing. I have been tempted beyond resistance by Greek coins, but it is no use to refuse Greek.

I will mail this letter now, for we start again to-morrow, and may not strike a town. Love to all.

XVII

*Hôtel Victoria, Damas (Syrie)*
21 *March*, '98

My dear Infant

Since I last wrote, a fortnight ago, from Alexandria, I have waited for letters which, as seemed reasonable to expect, would reach me here; but the Paris mail down to the 12th has arrived, without hoof or horn of a letter for me, and so, for fear you may be wondering whether I have started for the desert of Gobi, I will begin a despatch just to say that I am still hovering on the verge. The desert is not far off, but I am. This town is still quite within the bailiwick of the tourists, and is haunted by American females who have all been to Jerusalem or are all going there, and whose knowledge of the Scriptures is encyclopedic. It gives me quite a tired feeling to hear them talk. The reason, no doubt, is that I did not get to Jerusalem. The moment I got on board the steamer, the winds rose, and the waves with them, and your weary uncle, with a hundred more people, mostly sea-sick, wholly disgusted, was tossed about, like Jonah, and lay for a day

off Jaffa trying to get ashore without success, while a hundred more wretched tourists in Jaffa were watching us, hoping to escape from Jaffa and Palestine. In the end, I was carried on to Beirût and Syria, and Jerusalem must wait till I die and take it new. Not that Syria is altogether the promised land as I understood the contract. On arriving, knowing that Beirût had few resources, I told my dragoman that we would take the first train for Damascus. My order was greeted with a superior smile of contempt. For three days there had been no train to Damascus. The snow in the Lebanon had blocked the road. Beirût was full of Cook's tourists trying to get away, and storm-bound. After all, I had no right to complain, for at least I had no women to look after, which is the serious part of having to sleep on a table and to feed on salt-pork. A man can always make himself comfortable, or nearly always; and Beirût was comfortable enough in the intervals of rain, or when it didn't blow, or when one could sit without an overcoat in one's room. At last, on the 15th, I did get off, and, sure enough, the snow on the Lebanon would not have disgraced a Boston blizzard. This

was not so bad, but when it came to driving four or five hours up a bare Wyoming valley, in a biting wind, to Baalbek, and to shivering in company with a dozen New Yorkers in a Syrian hotel, without fire or means of making one, while outside it was freezing hard with a high wind, we thought warm winter climates a distinct feature of travel. Certainly Baalbek was cold; so is Damascus; and both are rainy; but still I was amused, and part of my amusement was due to the misery of the tourists. But they are wonderful! Nothing stops them. They are like the crusaders. They are mostly women, and they suffer miseries, and are dumped about like sheep, old and young, weak or strong, but they never flinch and never say, like the men, that the place is a fraud, and they want to be at home. I hear their nasal: "Oh! my!" and their lectures on the superiority of this over that, and on the mistake of Mrs. James in going to see Bethlehem when Mrs. Jones told her she ought to see Jericho; but the best lecture I have heard was a regular dressing-down given in my railway-carriage on the top of the Lebanon by an Englishwoman to an elderly middle-class Englishman of ap-

parently combative temperament, who seemed to be her brother, and whom she called Edmond. Edmond, as I thought rather excusably, though timidly, had ventured to say that he was disappointed in the look of the country, which seemed pardonable seeing that we were in a treeless waste of limestone mountain, covered with about three feet of snow. But his sister swelled and burst. "Edmond, this will become a habit! It is a bad one. It is a cancer. You must check it in time. *I* am not disappointed!" And so it went on, in flowing literary periods, for several minutes till Edmond was crushed, and meekly said that he wasn't very well, and perhaps was not in a state to enjoy travel properly. Even this did not altogether pacify her; but she resorted to a long entry in her diary to relieve her self-respect.

All the same, Baalbek interested me in a way as much as Egypt, and my cold drive taught me some geography; and by putting the temples on top of the geography, and the map in a corner, I began to understand why Alexander the Great and Napoleon Bonaparte and Thothmes the Second and Xerxes and Mahomet and Mark Antony

and Godfrey of Bouillon and Richard Cœur de Lion and Christ and Rameses the Great and Sennacherib, and pretty much everybody else down to Cook's tourists and my own poor piggishness, have seemed to haunt this region, which is in truth one of the least attractive spots, as regards its own merits, that I have ever struck. I will not give you a lecture on Syrian geography. As for the history, you can get your uncle Brooks to give you a copy of his new French edition when it comes out. The moral is that I had a splendid, sharp, sunny day, wandering about Baalbek, and plenty of subject for reflection as I went on, the next day, to Damascus, in a dreary rain among drearier hills through the Anti-Lebanon range, until at five o'clock I walked in to the hall of the inn at Damascus and found Mr. and Mrs. Ham Fish, Mrs. McLane, Miss Smith Cliff, Mr. and Mrs. Angell (our minister at Constantinople), two French counts, a pair of French countesses, and a couple of dozen Cook tourists, sitting round a red-hot American stove, trying to get warm. So I sat down too.

They are all gone now, but I linger on, waiting for a steamer to Smyrna, and beguil-

ing the days by mouseing and pottering here and there among the dirt and ruin of this picturesque haunt of thieves and religions. Moslem and Jew, Christian and Druse, Greek and Bedawin, and fifty other races who have robbed and murdered each other for many thousand years, are still thieving or toiling here, much as they always did; a trifle dirtier than ever, and rather meaner as their faiths decay, but still curious to look at, with heaps of local color, and, once in a while, when it gets a little warmer, a bluish purple in shadow. And the embroideries! and old glass! and old metal-work! Oh, Lord!

[In this interval the uncle's letters became more personal as to the niece's affairs, and more reserved as to his own. The Chartres book was written without an allusion to it in his letters, but a copy was sent to the niece in Paris, on January 1, 1905, with the accompanying words:

. . . "I sent you a copy of the Virgin's Miracles last week. My nieces are rather more numerous than I supposed, and I am now hesitating to decide whether the President counts in the class."

Later in the year, in Paris, the following note was written in answer to one from the niece, alarmed at the prospect of a mass to be said for her family at Saint-Sulpice, and at a request to be present:]

XVIII

23 *Avenue du Bois de Boulogne*
*Thursday* [*Oct.* 12, 1905]

DEAR INFANT

Every one has colds. I am having my nose sizzled. It's rather fun. Of course it is quite useless, for I went to the Doctor to see about eyes, not noses.

All my nurses and nieces are here now. Mrs. Winty Chanler and Laura; Mrs. Fred Jones and Trix; Mrs. Cameron and Martha; Mrs. Jaffrey and Nancy. My machine is quite worn out.

Perhaps John will kindly stick me into his mass. I need it more than you. I've not the least objection to being prayed for. For that matter I have no objection to being taken into all the churches there are. Why not? Any one of them is good enough for a sinner like me. I'm afraid the objection would come from the Church. In all my life I've never met a Church willing to touch me. After all, I have to belong to a State, under the same conditions, and have to pay my taxes and admire the Senators. My rule is to conform. It is the only path of freedom. . . .

XIX

23 *Avenue du Bois de Boulogne*
*Thursday* [1905]

DEAR NIECE

The jam has been severe, no doubt, and still keeps up, though I don't object to it, if only one could feel as though, in trying to be civil to one person, some other person

were not neglected and as my sister Ann says "hurt." About the nieces I don't care. You and the others have got to stand it, and take your gruel just as I do myself. You are all now fit for your work, and must do it like other people. But the country-cousins from Boston and elsewhere, worry me much.

I was at it all day yesterday, and got my load drenched and soaked. Duel till midnight. This ends all engagements to speak of, but it is not so much the actual as the conditional engagements that bother one. *If* the weather is good, and *if* my dress fits, and *if* my husband is away, you may take me out, &c, &c, *if* you can get tickets. . . .

XX

23 *Avenue du Bois de Boulogne*
*Friday* [*November*, 1905]

. . . I PASSED Toussaint at Chartres all by my lone, deadly cold and famished, but vesper service quite immense with its changing evening lights. At moments it was so operatic that I had to reason it out to be real. One has seen such things only in Jew Operas.

I have been in hiding all the week, seeing

nobody and going nowhere. If I come to you this afternoon it will be on my knees, for I am no better than Mrs. Gay.

## XXI

*September* 26, 1907

. . . PARIS seems to me stupider in ideas than I ever knew it before, and no one tells me of anything to see or hear or do. Not a book or a play or a picture or an opera or a building have I heard of, or been told to expect. The weather has turned fine, and furnishes the only subject of conversation. I am quite curious to know whether the new batches of young students coming out now feel the sense of novelty and activity that the old crowd did; and what they like or dislike.

I am surprised, too, at noticing what an awful blow the Church has had. Here it has almost disappeared. Even in the Faubourg it talks like a moribund. But in England it shows its decline most sadly. The deceased wife's sister has played the devil with it, and a very large majority of English people now want disestablishment like the French.

Things move terribly fast. I doubt whether

your children will know what a Church is, at this rate; and you might bring them all up to be priests without their reaching the first idea of what you meant — unless, indeed, they were born priests, and in that case nothing would divert them. As you know, I regret it, for all the thought or imagination that ever existed, and all the art, had its source there, and the world is left to trades-unions and Apaches without it.

Let us be glad that the women help to keep it going a little.

XXII

23 *Avenue du Bois de Boulogne*
*Thursday*, 4 *June*, 1908

. . . Paris is exceedingly full of acquaintances and friends. I have just returned from personally conducting the Brices and Winty Chanlers through Normandy, which is no slight effort, for Normandy and Brittany are piggy and baths unattainable. Mont Saint Michel is a hole and stye in respect of comfort. But the weather was fine, and the automobiling perfect, and the apple-blossoms divine like the 12th century.

Paris verges on 100° Fahrenheit, but keeps

a steady sequence of breakfast and dinners and even Operas and Theatres, and balls and routs. Never did I feel advancing age so much as now when the women — like your Miss Lazurus — no longer fear to flatter an old man grossly, and the old man has to flatter back in self-defence. *Rendez-moi mes quatre-vingt ans!* I curl up green before the shame of it, but what does it matter if I get out in time! I fear only over-staying my invitation.

You must not read what you call your book [the "Education"], because the Chartres is good enough for you, and me too, and the pigs all about. The book is not meant to be read. It was put in print to be sent to persons mentioned in it, to obtain their permission; or to persons competent to correct it or suggest changes. They were requested to return it when corrected, which they mostly forget to do. Mrs. Chanler and Mrs. Lodge had copies because they helped to write it, but I don't carry a stack of volumes round on my back when I travel, and I have had to refuse copies to everybody for that reason. Even the Chartres is now all given away, and I have had to refuse — or rather to ex-

cuse — liberally. It is all nonsense. No one really reads either volume, as I can instantly see when they talk of it. They only play pretend, like children, and ask for it because it is not for sale. Don't believe a word of what you are told. The only sensible reader I have had is a lady who could not endure the Chartres because it was so matter-of-fact and totally wanting in sentiment. I know what *she* means.

Except Mme. de Boigne who is excellent, there is nothing new to read, as far as I can learn. No one has helped me to anything in the month since I arrived. I sat on Edith Wharton's hearth-rug with Henry James for a fortnight without gleaning a fresh straw. All my particular bright ladies are here — Mrs. Winty Chanler, Mrs. Matilda Gay, Mrs. Van Vorst, Mrs. Fred Jones — besides my sentimental attachments like Mrs. Cooper Hewitt and not one of them has anything to tell.

The children are probably better company, for they at least learn. Give them my love.

XXIII

23 *Avenue du Bois de Boulogne*
*5 July*

Mons. Ba La Farge
Aux soins de Mme. sa Mère

My dear Ba

You write a beautiful hand, and deserve very good marks for it. I would like to come to Corbeyrier to see you, but I am a very, very little boy, only five years old, and my mamma does not want to travel with me because I give so much trouble. So I shall stay in Paris, and play in the Bois de Boulogne and the Pré Catalan if the weather only gets dry and warm. Just now the rain makes everything wet and gives me colds. I have no flowers. They all grow in the country, but I had some raspberries and cream yesterday to eat. And your uncle Sturgis had some big plums, — Reine Claudes; — he said he liked them.

Be sure and paint some nice pictures at Corbeyrier, where you will be sure to find some meadow-orchids or Alpine flowers to paint, along with a few Alps. I think the

Alps are very pretty flowers in the evening when they go to bed.

Give my love to the other boys. Ever your affectionate

UNCLE HENRY.

XXIV

88 *Avenue du Bois de Boulogne*
*Tuesday*

MY DEAR HENRY

I am glad to hear that you are in a palace, but even more to hear about the wasp and butterfly. I know that wasps are very queer in their habits, and some day, if you will read M. Fabre's Souvenirs Entomologiques you will take to digging up all the holes in the garden, or on the roadside, to see what the wasps have put there for their children. Perhaps you will find some of the butterfly's wings. You will have to get a little trowel to dig with, small enough to put in your pocket. Tell your father to get one for you and charge it to your next Christmas present.

Perhaps you will find a big black beetle in some of the holes, with long horns.

Of course you will know the mole's holes from the wasps' and beetles'.

You can tell your mamma that I have noth-

ing to write about except what your aunt Looly tells her every day.

Give my love to the other boys.

Affecly yrs

HENRY ADAMS

XXV

15 *Sept.* 1908
23 *Avenue du Bois de Boulogne*

THANK the good gods, the weather has turned fine, and I am able to run out and wander in the woods as though I were one of your infants. But I find few flowers left, and happily fewer flies. The forest of Marly is as pretty as ever, and St.-Germain has not changed a pebble. I was at Chartres yesterday to see whether I myself had changed. The day was gorgeous, and the sun too strong for the glass. I saw nothing to correct. After some ten years of reflection, it seems to me I got it pretty right. . . .

# PRAYER TO
# THE VIRGIN OF CHARTRES

## PRAYER
## TO
## THE VIRGIN OF CHARTRES

GRACIOUS LADY: —

SIMPLE as when I asked your aid before;
Humble as when I prayed for grace in vain
Seven hundred years ago; weak, weary, sore
In heart and hope, I ask your help again.

You, who remember all, remember me;
An English scholar of a Norman name,
I was a thousand who then crossed the sea
To wrangle in the Paris schools for fame.

When your Byzantine portal was still young
I prayed there with my master Abailard;
When Ave Maris Stella was first sung,
I helped to sing it here with Saint Bernard.

When Blanche set up your gorgeous Rose of France
I stood among the servants of the Queen;
And when Saint Louis made his penitence,
I followed barefoot where the King had been.

For centuries I brought you all my cares,
And vexed you with the murmurs of a child;
You heard the tedious burden of my prayers;
You could not grant them, but at least you smiled.

If then I left you, it was not my crime,
Or if a crime, it was not mine alone.
All children wander with the truant Time.
Pardon me too! You pardoned once your Son!

For He said to you: — "Wist ye not that I
Must be about my Father's business?" So,
Seeking his Father he pursued his way
Straight to the Cross towards which we all must go.

So I too wandered off among the host
That racked the earth to find the father's clue.
I did not find the Father, but I lost
What now I value more, the Mother, — You!

I thought the fault was yours that foiled my search;
I turned and broke your image on its throne,

Cast down my idol, and resumed my march
To claim the father's empire for my own.

Crossing the hostile sea, our greedy band
Saw rising hills and forests in the blue;
Our father's kingdom in the promised land!
— We seized it, and dethroned the father too.

And now we are the Father, with our brood,
Ruling the Infinite, not Three but One;
We made our world and saw that it was good;
Ourselves we worship, and we have no Son.

Yet we have Gods, for even our strong nerve
Falters before the Energy we own.
Which shall be master? Which of us shall serve?
Which wears the fetters? Which shall bear the crown?

Brave though we be, we dread to face the Sphinx,
Or answer the old riddle she still asks.
Strong as we are, our reckless courage shrinks
To look beyond the piece-work of our tasks.

But when we must, we pray, as in the past
Before the Cross on which your Son was nailed.
Listen, dear lady! You shall hear the last
Of the strange prayers Humanity has wailed.

---

## PRAYER TO THE DYNAMO

Mysterious Power! Gentle Friend!
Despotic Master! Tireless Force!
You and We are near the End.
Either You or We must bend
To bear the martyrs' Cross.

We know ourselves, what we can bear
As men; our strength and weakness too;
Down to the fraction of a hair;
And know that we, with all our care
And knowledge, know not you.

You come in silence, Primal Force,
We know not whence, or when, or why;
You stay a moment in your course
To play; and, lo! you leap across
To Alpha Centauri!

## PRAYER TO THE VIRGIN

We know not whether you are kind,
  Or cruel in your fiercer mood;
But be you Matter, be you Mind,
We think we know that you are blind,
  And we alone are good.

We know that prayer is thrown away,
  For you are only force and light;
A shifting current; night and day;
We know this well, and yet we pray,
  For prayer is infinite,

Like you! Within the finite sphere
  That bounds the impotence of thought,
We search an outlet everywhere
But only find that we are here
  And that you are — are not!

What are we then? the lords of space?
  The master-mind whose tasks you do?
Jockey who rides you in the race?
Or are we atoms whirled apace,
  Shaped and controlled by you?

Still silence! Still no end in sight!
  No sound in answer to our cry!
Then, by the God we now hold tight,

Though we destroy soul, life and light,
Answer you shall — or die!

We are no beggars! What care we
For hopes or terrors, love or hate?
What for the universe? We see
Only our certain destiny
And the last word of Fate.

Seize, then, the Atom! rack his joints!
Tear out of him his secret spring!
Grind him to nothing! — though he points
To us, and his life-blood anoints
Me — the dead Atom-King!

---

A CURIOUS prayer, dear lady! is it not?
Strangely unlike the prayers I prayed to you!
Stranger because you find me at this spot,
Here, at your feet, asking your help anew.

Strangest of all, that I have ceased to strive,
Ceased even care what new coin fate shall strike.
In truth it does not matter. Fate will give
Some answer; and all answers are alike.

So, while we slowly rack and torture death
And wait for what the final void will show,
Waiting I feel the energy of faith
Not in the future science, but in you!

The man who solves the Infinite, and needs
The force of solar systems for his play,
Will not need me, nor greatly care what deeds
Made me illustrious in the dawn of day.

He will send me, dethroned, to claim my rights,
Fossil survival of an age of stone,
Among the cave-men and the troglodytes
Who carved the mammoth on the mammoth's bone.

He will forget my thought, my acts, my fame,
As we forget the shadows of the dusk,
Or catalogue the echo of a name
As we the scratches on the mammoth's tusk.

But when, like me, he too has trod the track
Which leads him up to power above control,
He too will have no choice but wander back
And sink in helpless hopelessness of soul,

Before your majesty of grace and love,
The purity, the beauty and the faith;
The depth of tenderness beneath; above,
The glory of the life and of the death.

When your Byzantine portal still was young,
I came here with my master Abailard;
When Ave Maris Stella was first sung,
I joined to sing it here with Saint Bernard.

When Blanche set up your glorious Rose of France,
In scholar's robes I waited on the Queen;
When good Saint Louis did his penitence,
My prayer was deep like his: my faith as keen.

What loftier prize seven hundred years shall bring,
What deadlier struggles for a larger air,
What immortality our strength shall wring
From Time and Space, we may — or may not — care;

But years, or ages, or eternity,
Will find me still in thought before your throne,

## PRAYER TO THE VIRGIN

Pondering the mystery of Maternity,
Soul within Soul, — Mother and Child in One!

Help me to see! not with my mimic sight —
With yours! which carried radiance, like the sun,
Giving the rays you saw with — light in light —
Tying all suns and stars and worlds in one.

Help me to know! not with my mocking art —
With you, who knew yourself unbound by laws;
Gave God your strength, your life, your sight, your heart,
And took from him the Thought that Is — the Cause.

Help me to feel! not with my insect sense, —
With yours that felt all life alive in you;
Infinite heart beating at your expense;
Infinite passion breathing the breath you drew!

Help me to bear! not my own baby load,
But yours; who bore the failure of the light,
The strength, the knowledge and the thought
of God,—
The futile folly of the Infinite!

The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE . MASSACHUSETTS
U . S . A